THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™
HAUNTED HORROR™
#10
$3.99
YOE® COMICS
FORELOCK the WARLOCK

MR. KARSWELL

AH-HA, FRIENDS! WELCOME TO ANOTHER DREAD-DRENCHED COLLECTION OF SHUDDERY SHOCKS AND SUPERNATURAL SUSPENSE! I SENSE THAT OUR PREVIOUS ISSUE SENT YOU SCREAMING TO YOUR TOMB, BECAUSE YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY BACK FROM YOUR GRIMY GRAVES, AND DYING FOR MORE! IT'S YOUR LUCKY DAY TOO, AS 13 OF MY OWN FAVORITE PHANTASMS HAVE DROPPED BY WITH A TRULY KILLER TALE TO GET US STARTED, HEE HEE! AND JUST TRY TO KEEP YOURSELF IN ONE PIECE FOR THE EXPLOSIVE ENDING!
I REPEAT, IF THIS STORY DOESN'T FINISH YOU OFF, THEN MAYBE THE VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES, ZOMBIES, OR OTHER CONJURED CREEPS FROM THIS ISSUE WILL! BEST OF LUCK TO YOU ALL, YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHY...
Art by Art Fuentes
ARTFF 9/12

Look for another spine-tingling issue of *Haunted Horror* in two months!

If you collect horror comics and other Golden Age fare, we're always looking for scans for use in our books and comics. Please contact Craig Yoe through Facebook.

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Many thanks to: Giovanna Anzaldi, Bill Leach, Steven Thompson, and Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr.
Haunted Horror logo by Art Fuentes.

On the cover, *Mister Mystery* #8, November 1952.
Pencils attributed to Tony Mortellaro; inks attributed to Bernard Baily.

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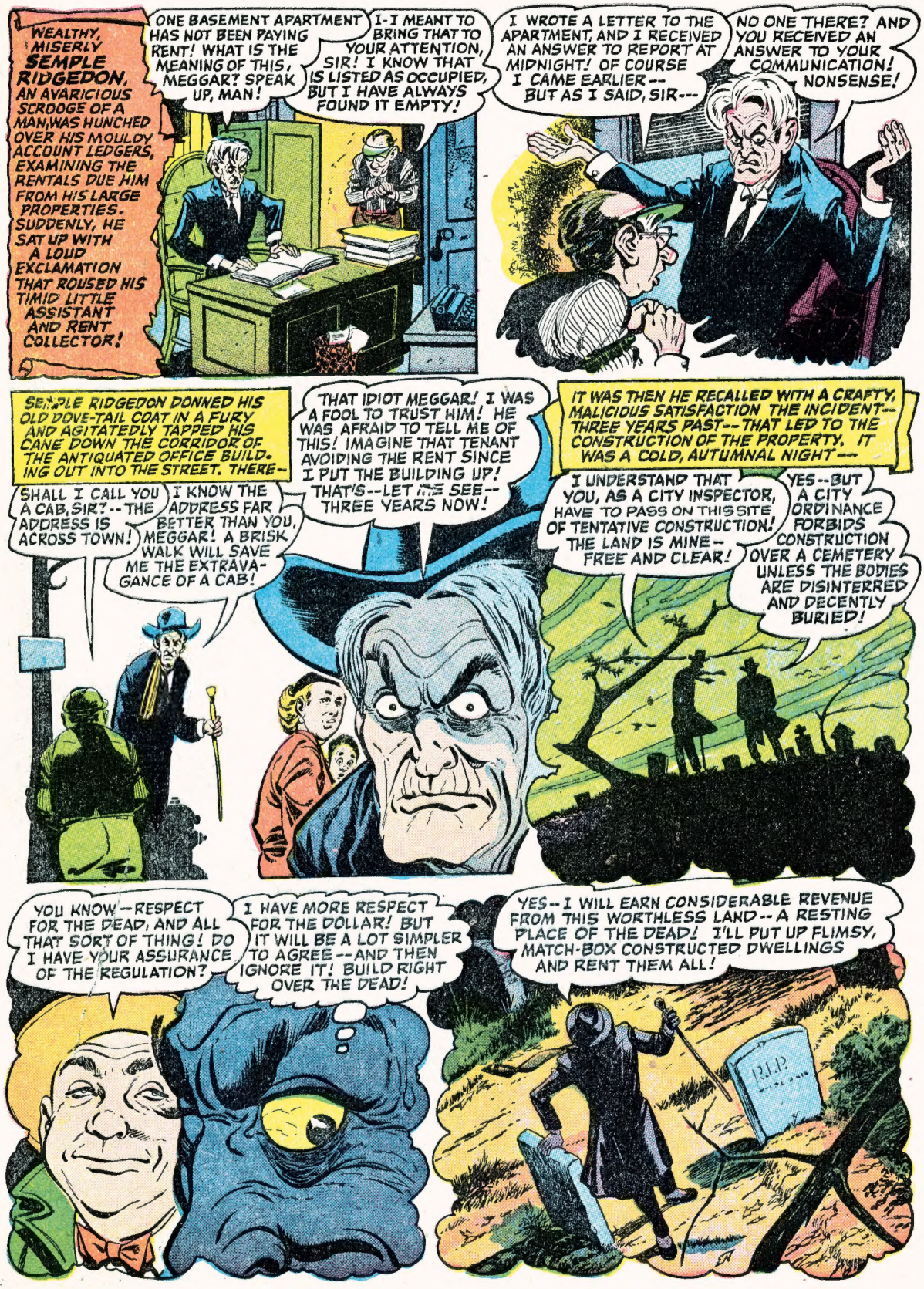
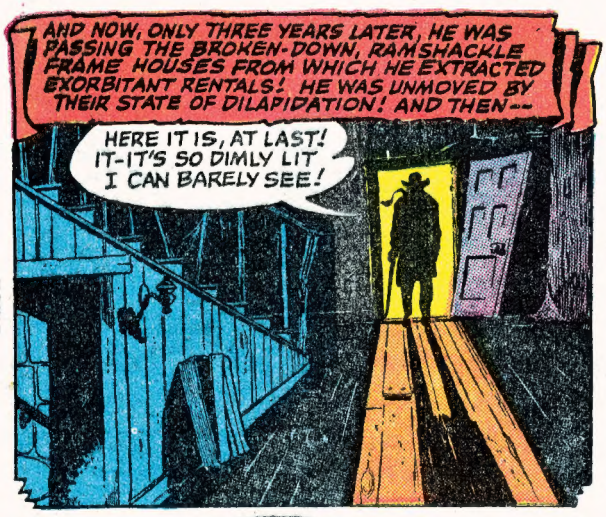
MY DEAREST LITTLE HAUNTED HORROR CULT MEMBERS, HERE'S A SPIRITED TALE GUARANTEED TO BRING YOU MY FAVORITE KIND OF LUCK... BAD!

Art by
Drazen Kozjan

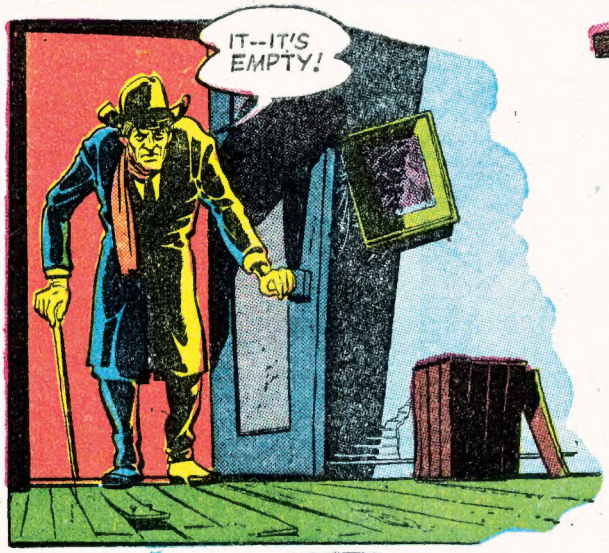
LIFE AND DEATH ARE THE BEGINNING AND THE END! AT OPPOSITE POLES OF MAN'S EXISTENCE, AND YET--MORE CLOSELY INTERLOCKED THAN THE FINGERS OF YOUR OWN HANDS! AS SEMPLE RIDGEDON WAS TO DISCOVER--THE DEAD COULD RISE! AND GHOSTLY APPARITIONS STALK THE SHROUDED NIGHT IN...
The CULT OF THE 13 GHOSTS
NO! NO! I-I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE THIS ROOM ALIVE, SEMPLE RIDGEDON! ---NEVER!

This Magazine is Haunted #3, February 1952. Artist: Bob Powell. Publisher: Fawcett.

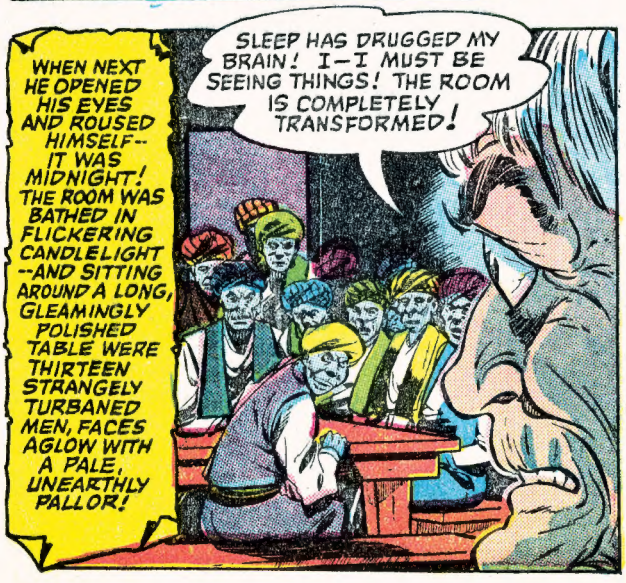

WEALTHY, MISERLY SEMPLE RIDGEDON, AN AVARICIOUS SCROOGE OF A MAN, WAS HUNCHED OVER HIS MOULDY ACCOUNT LEDGERS, EXAMINING THE RENTALS DUE HIM FROM HIS LARGE PROPERTIES. SUDDENLY, HE SAT UP WITH A LOUD EXCLAMATION THAT ROUSED HIS TIMID LITTLE ASSISTANT AND RENT COLLECTOR!
ONE BASEMENT APARTMENT HAS NOT BEEN PAYING RENT! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, MEGGAR? SPEAK UP, MAN!
I-I MEANT TO BRING THAT TO YOUR ATTENTION, SIR! I KNOW THAT IS LISTED AS OCCUPIED, BUT I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND IT EMPTY!
I WROTE A LETTER TO THE APARTMENT, AND I RECEIVED AN ANSWER TO REPORT AT MIDNIGHT! OF COURSE I CAME EARLIER -- BUT AS I SAID, SIR---
NO ONE THERE? AND YOU RECEIVED AN ANSWER TO YOUR COMMUNICATION! NONSENSE!
SEMPLE RIDGEDON DONNED HIS OLD DOVE-TAIL COAT IN A FURY AND AGITATEDLY TAPPED HIS CANE DOWN THE CORRIDOR OF THE ANTIQUATED OFFICE BUILDING OUT INTO THE STREET. THERE--
SHALL I CALL YOU A CAB, SIR? -- THE ADDRESS IS ACROSS TOWN!
I KNOW THE ADDRESS FAR BETTER THAN YOU, MEGGAR! A BRISK WALK WILL SAVE ME THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF A CAB!
THAT IDIOT MEGGAR! I WAS A FOOL TO TRUST HIM! HE WAS AFRAID TO TELL ME OF THIS! IMAGINE THAT TENANT AVOIDING THE RENT SINCE I PUT THE BUILDING UP! THAT'S -- LET ME SEE -- THREE YEARS NOW!
IT WAS THEN HE RECALLED WITH A CRAFTY, MALICIOUS SATISFACTION THE INCIDENT -- THREE YEARS PAST -- THAT LED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPERTY. IT WAS A COLD, AUTUMNAL NIGHT---
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU, AS A CITY INSPECTOR, HAVE TO PASS ON THIS SITE OF TENTATIVE CONSTRUCTION! THE LAND IS MINE -- FREE AND CLEAR!
YES -- BUT A CITY ORDINANCE FORBIDS CONSTRUCTION OVER A CEMETERY UNLESS THE BODIES ARE DISINTERRED AND DECENTLY BURIED!
YOU KNOW -- RESPECT FOR THE DEAD, AND ALL THAT SORT OF THING! DO I HAVE YOUR ASSURANCE OF THE REGULATION?
I HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR THE DOLLAR! BUT IT WILL BE A LOT SIMPLER TO AGREE -- AND THEN IGNORE IT! BUILD RIGHT OVER THE DEAD!
YES -- I WILL EARN CONSIDERABLE REVENUE FROM THIS WORTHLESS LAND -- A RESTING PLACE OF THE DEAD! I'LL PUT UP FLIMSY, MATCH-BOX CONSTRUCTED DWELLINGS AND RENT THEM ALL!
R.I.P.


AND NOW, ONLY THREE YEARS LATER, HE WAS PASSING THE BROKEN-DOWN, RAMSHACKLE FRAME HOUSES FROM WHICH HE EXTRACTED EXORBITANT RENTALS! HE WAS UNMOVED BY THEIR STATE OF DILAPIDATION! AND THEN--
HERE IT IS, AT LAST! IT-IT'S SO DIMLY LIT I CAN BARELY SEE!

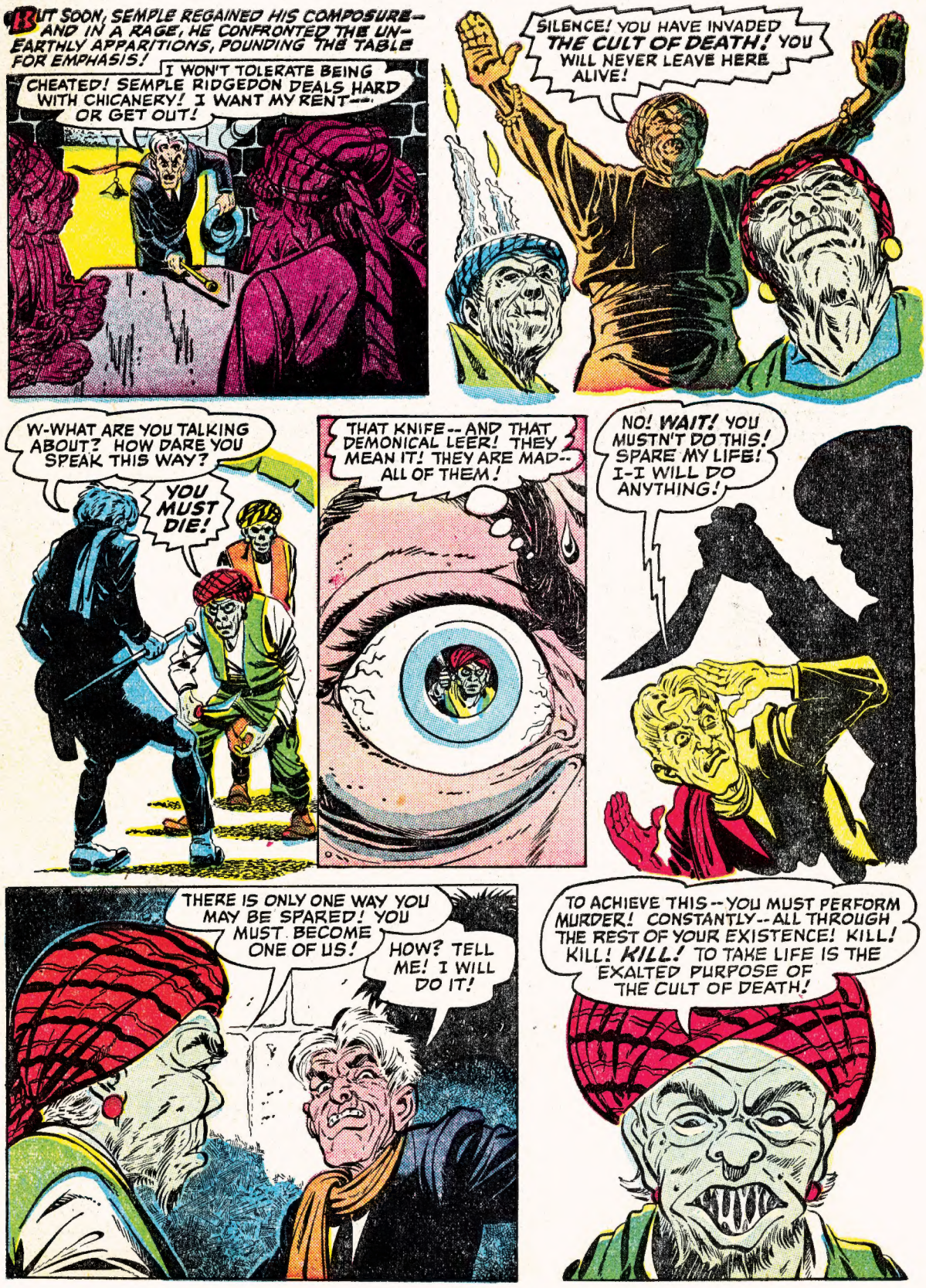
AHHH--THE BASEMENT! WE SHALL SEE WHETHER I GET MY RENTAL OR NOT!

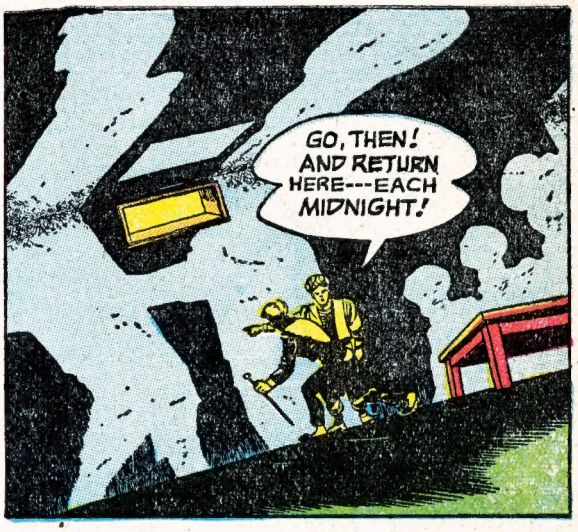

IT--IT'S EMPTY!

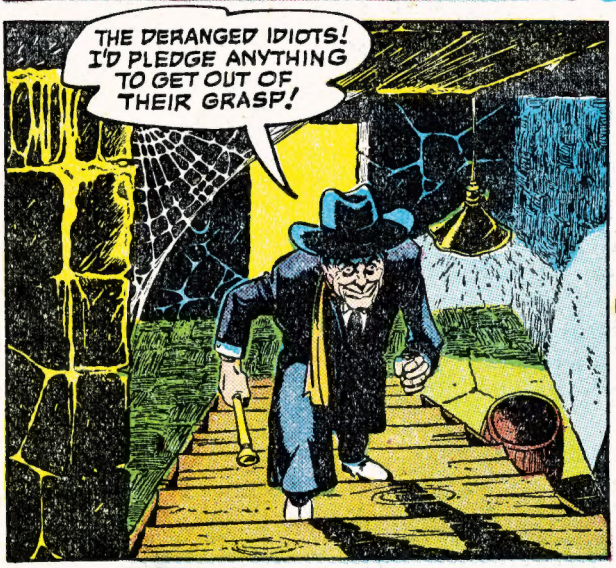
INFURIATED AND EXHAUSTED AFTER HIS LONG AND PROFITLESS WALK, HE LEANED WEARILY BACK AGAINST AN OLD CRATE. FATIGUE WEIGHED HIS LIDS!
LETTERS WITHOUT SENDERS! VACANT BASEMENTS LISTED AS OCCUPIED! TRICKERY--THAT'S WHAT IT IS!


WHEN NEXT HE OPENED HIS EYES AND ROUSED HIMSELF--IT WAS MIDNIGHT! THE ROOM WAS BATHED IN FLICKERING CANDLELIGHT--AND SITTING AROUND A LONG, GLEAMINGLY POLISHED TABLE WERE THIRTEEN STRANGELY TURBANED MEN, FACES AGLOW WITH A PALE, UNEARTHLY PALLOR!
SLEEP HAS DRUGGED MY BRAIN! I--I MUST BE SEEING THINGS! THE ROOM IS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED!

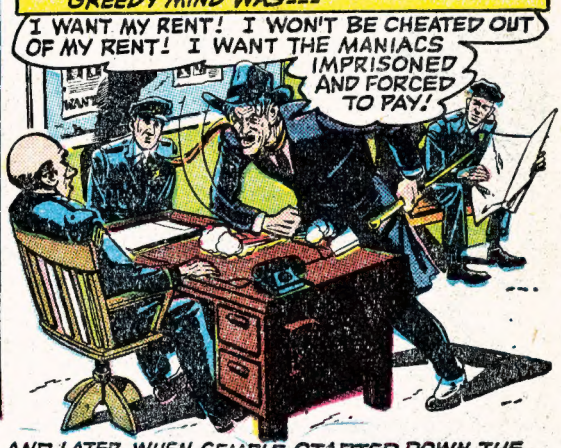
THOSE MEN--THEY'RE ALL STARING AT ME!


BUT SOON, SEMPLE REGAINED HIS COMPOSURE--AND IN A RAGE, HE CONFRONTED THE UNEARTHLY APPARITIONS, POUNDING THE TABLE FOR EMPHASIS!
I WON'T TOLERATE BEING CHEATED! SEMPLE RIDGEDON DEALS HARD WITH CHICANERY! I WANT MY RENT--OR GET OUT!
SILENCE! YOU HAVE INVADED THE CULT OF DEATH! YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE HERE ALIVE!
W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HOW DARE YOU SPEAK THIS WAY?
YOU MUST DIE!
THAT KNIFE--AND THAT DEMONICAL LEER! THEY MEAN IT! THEY ARE MAD--ALL OF THEM!
NO! WAIT! YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS! SPARE MY LIFE! I-I WILL DO ANYTHING!
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY YOU MAY BE SPARED! YOU MUST BECOME ONE OF US!
HOW? TELL ME! I WILL DO IT!
TO ACHIEVE THIS--YOU MUST PERFORM MURDER! CONSTANTLY--ALL THROUGH THE REST OF YOUR EXISTENCE! KILL! KILL! KILL! TO TAKE LIFE IS THE EXALTED PURPOSE OF THE CULT OF DEATH!



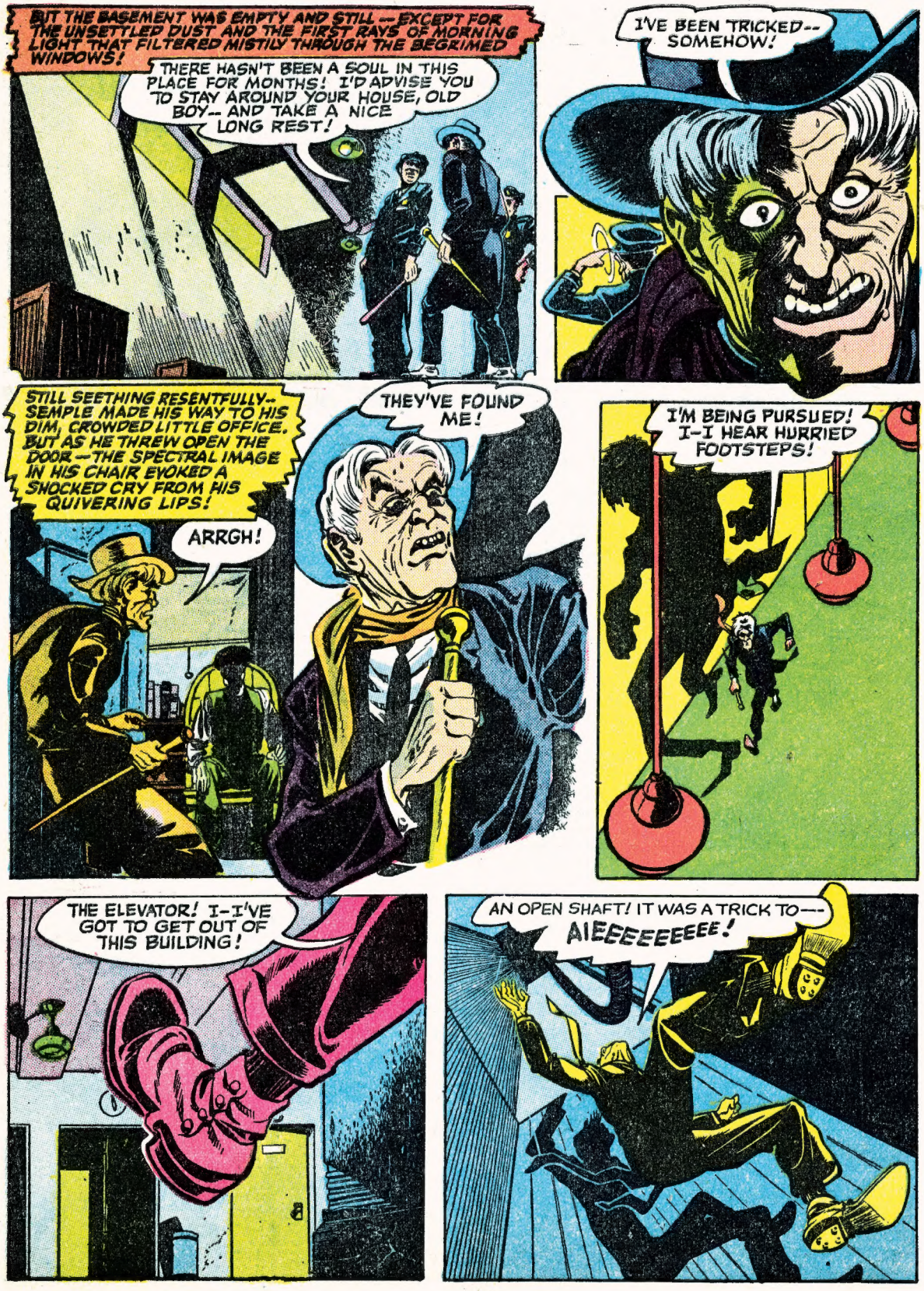


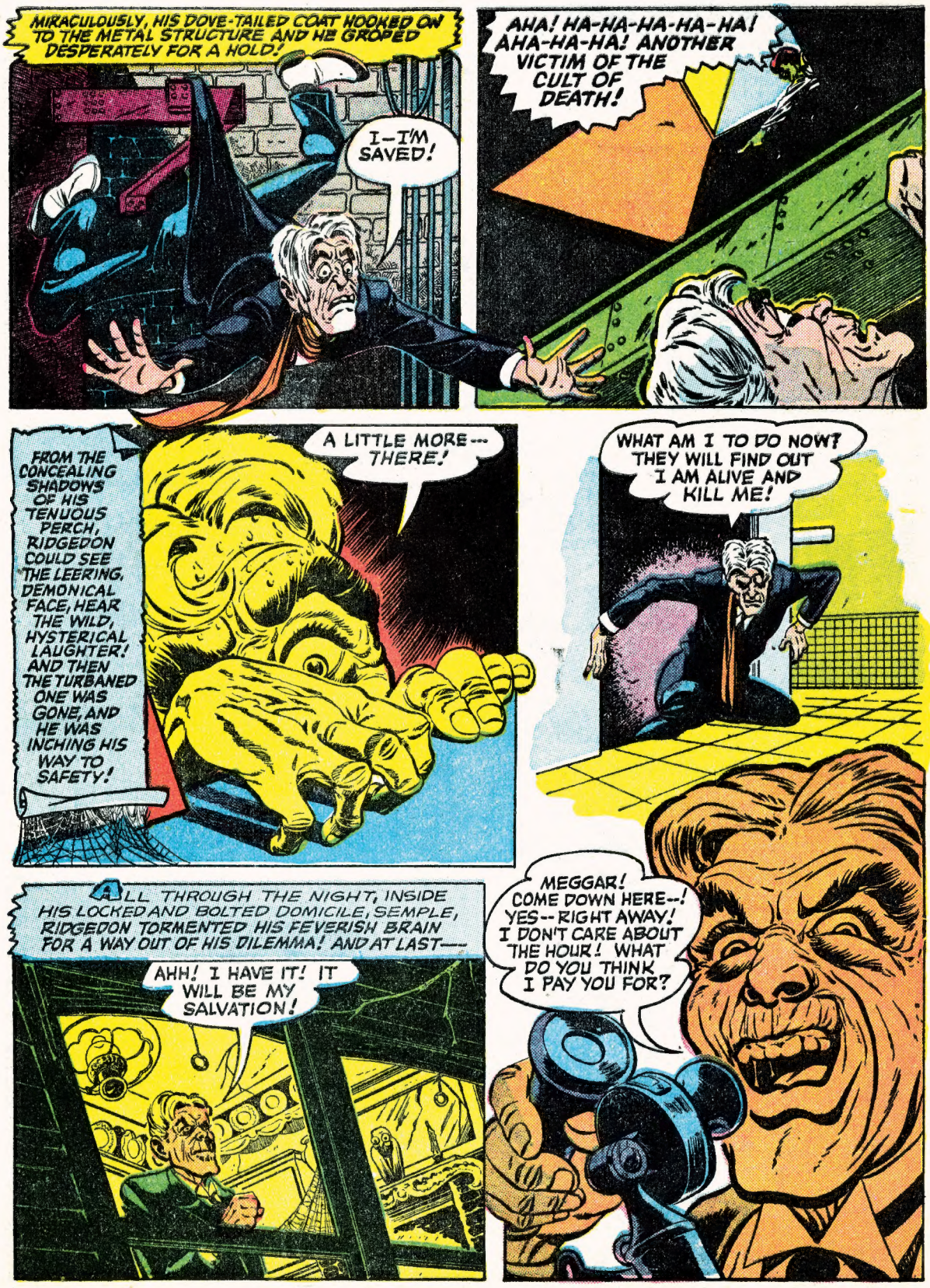
AND WITHIN THE HOUR, STILL PERSPIRING FROM HIS ORDEAL, SEMPLE CONFRONTED THE POLICE AT THE NEAREST PRECINCT STATION! HE RANTED ABOUT WHAT HAD OCCURRED, BUT ALWAYS FIRST AND FOREMOST IN HIS GREEDY MIND WAS---

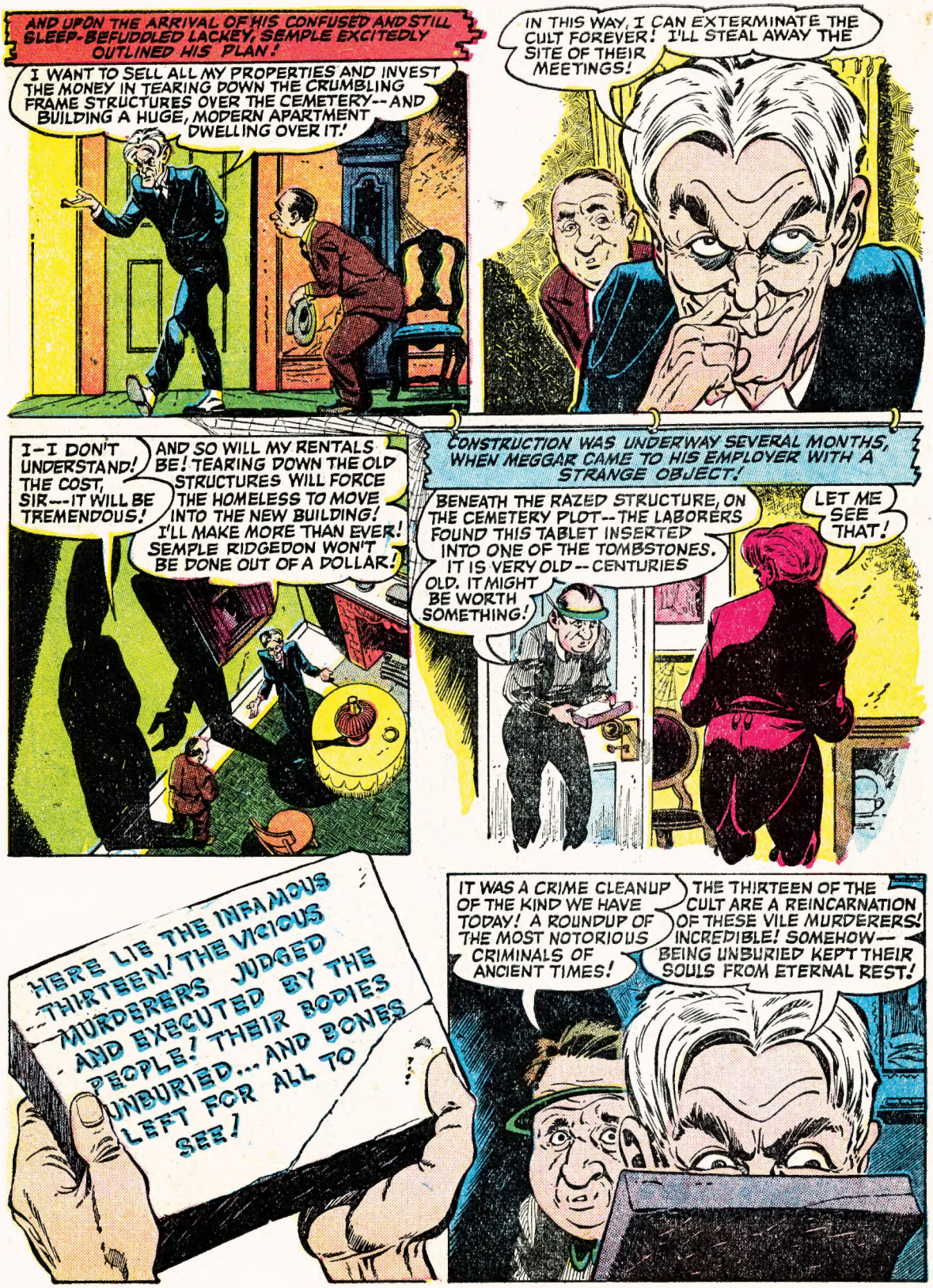


OKAY-OKAY, WE'LL LOOK INTO THIS! BUT IS SURE SOUNDS SCREWY TO ME!
TURBANS AND EERIE CANDLELIGHT! SOUNDS LIKE A LONG NIGHT AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD BAR!

AND LATER, WHEN SEMPLE STARTED DOWN THE BASEMENT STEPS IN THE COMPANY OF THE LAW--HIS FEAR HAD BECOME AN EMBITTERED DESIRE FOR VENGEANCE!


BUT THE BASEMENT WAS EMPTY AND STILL -- EXCEPT FOR THE UNSETTLED DUST AND THE FIRST RAYS OF MORNING LIGHT THAT FILTERED MISTILY THROUGH THE BEGRIMED WINDOWS!
THERE HASN'T BEEN A SOUL IN THIS PLACE FOR MONTHS! I'D ADVISE YOU TO STAY AROUND YOUR HOUSE, OLD BOY-- AND TAKE A NICE LONG REST!
I'VE BEEN TRICKED-- SOMEHOW!
STILL SEETHING RESENTFULLY-- SEMPLE MADE HIS WAY TO HIS DIM, CROWDED LITTLE OFFICE. BUT AS HE THREW OPEN THE DOOR -- THE SPECTRAL IMAGE IN HIS CHAIR EVOKED A SHOCKED CRY FROM HIS QUIVERING LIPS!
ARRGH!
THEY'VE FOUND ME!
I'M BEING PURSUED! I-I HEAR HURRIED FOOTSTEPS!
THE ELEVATOR! I-I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS BUILDING!
AN OPEN SHAFT! IT WAS A TRICK TO--- AIEEEEEEEEE!


MIRACULOUSLY, HIS DOVE-TAILED COAT HOOKED ON TO THE METAL STRUCTURE AND HE GROPED DESPERATELY FOR A HOLD!
I—I'M SAVED!
AHA! HA-HA-HA-HA-HA! AHA-HA-HA! ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE CULT OF DEATH!
FROM THE CONCEALING SHADOWS OF HIS TENUOUS PERCH, RIDGEDON COULD SEE THE LEERING, DEMONICAL FACE, HEAR THE WILD, HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER! AND THEN THE TURBANED ONE WAS GONE, AND HE WAS INCHING HIS WAY TO SAFETY!
A LITTLE MORE--- THERE!
WHAT AM I TO DO NOW? THEY WILL FIND OUT I AM ALIVE AND KILL ME!
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, INSIDE HIS LOCKED AND BOLTED DOMICILE, SEMPLE, RIDGEDON TORMENTED HIS FEVERISH BRAIN FOR A WAY OUT OF HIS DILEMMA! AND AT LAST—
AHH! I HAVE IT! IT WILL BE MY SALVATION!
MEGGAR! COME DOWN HERE--! YES--RIGHT AWAY! I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE HOUR! WHAT DO YOU THINK I PAY YOU FOR?


AND UPON THE ARRIVAL OF HIS CONFUSED AND STILL SLEEP-BEFUDDLED LACKEY, SEMPLE EXCITEDLY OUTLINED HIS PLAN!
I WANT TO SELL ALL MY PROPERTIES AND INVEST THE MONEY IN TEARING DOWN THE CRUMBLING FRAME STRUCTURES OVER THE CEMETERY--AND BUILDING A HUGE, MODERN APARTMENT DWELLING OVER IT!
IN THIS WAY, I CAN EXTERMINATE THE CULT FOREVER! I'LL STEAL AWAY THE SITE OF THEIR MEETINGS!
I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND! THE COST, SIR---IT WILL BE TREMENDOUS!
AND SO WILL MY RENTALS BE! TEARING DOWN THE OLD STRUCTURES WILL FORCE THE HOMELESS TO MOVE INTO THE NEW BUILDING! I'LL MAKE MORE THAN EVER! SEMPLE RIDGEDON WON'T BE DONE OUT OF A DOLLAR!
CONSTRUCTION WAS UNDERWAY SEVERAL MONTHS, WHEN MEGGAR CAME TO HIS EMPLOYER WITH A STRANGE OBJECT!
BENEATH THE RAZED STRUCTURE, ON THE CEMETERY PLOT--THE LABORERS FOUND THIS TABLET INSERTED INTO ONE OF THE TOMBSTONES. IT IS VERY OLD--CENTURIES OLD. IT MIGHT BE WORTH SOMETHING!
LET ME SEE THAT!
HERE LIE THE INFAMOUS THIRTEEN! THE VICIOUS MURDERERS JUDGED AND EXECUTED BY THE PEOPLE! THEIR BODIES UNBURIED... AND BONES LEFT FOR ALL TO SEE!
IT WAS A CRIME CLEANUP OF THE KIND WE HAVE TODAY! A ROUNDUP OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS OF ANCIENT TIMES!
THE THIRTEEN OF THE CULT ARE A REINCARNATION OF THESE VILE MURDERERS! INCREDIBLE! SOMEHOW--BEING UNBURIED KEPT THEIR SOULS FROM ETERNAL REST!

THE DEAD ARISEN! HOW FORTUNATE I PROCEEDED AS I DID!
I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND, SIR...
BUT SEMPLE BIDED HIS TIME UNTIL THE STRUCTURE WAS COMPLETED. NEVER ONCE HAD HE VENTURED TO APPEAR UPON THE SITE! BUT AT LONG LAST, THE MOMENTOUS DAY HAD COME!
HOW MAGNIFICENT A DWELLING! INDEED--A MONUMENT TO THE INGENUITY OF SEMPLE RIDGEDON!
B-BUT THE RENTALS ARE VERY SLOW, SIR...
YOUR BUNGLING UNDOUBTEDLY ACCOUNTS FOR THAT! I'LL ATTEND TO IT! NOW-- GIVE ME THE TABLET! IT WILL BE A FITTING ADDITION TO THE CORNER STONE!
BUT WHAT IS THIS? -- A DOORMAN! I NEVER EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO HIRE A DOORMAN!
IT CAN'T BE! ONE WAS NEVER EMPLOYED!
OH, NO --- IT-IT IS ONE OF THE CULT!
THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR IS ANOTHER! TH-THEY HAVE TAKEN OVER THE BUILDING!
GOING DOWN, SIR?

THEY ARE AFTER ME! I AM TRAPPED!
TERRIFIED, SEMPLE RIDGEDON RAN UP AND DOWN THE EMPTY HALLWAYS, DESPERATELY SEEKING A WAY OUT! BUT FROM EVERY CORNER THERE WAS THE FAMILIAR MOCKING, MANIACAL LAUGHTER THAT DROVE HIM ON AND ON! AS A LAST RESORT, HE HEADED FOR A BASEMENT EXIT! AND THERE--
SO! YOU HAVE RETURNED AT LAST!
AIEEE!
THIS TIME--YOU SHALL REMAIN, FOREVER! PREPARE FOR YOUR DEMISE, SEMPLE RIDGEDON! THE CULT OF DEATH CAN NEVER BE BETRAYED!
THERE WAS NO ESCAPE! AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, TREMBLING SEMPLE SAW THAT ALL HIS WEALTH COULD DO NOTHING TO SAVE HIM!
I--I WILL DIE AND NOT A SINGLE PERSON WILL MOURN ME! AND WHAT SHALL BE MY LEGACY TO THE LIVING--AN APARTMENT HOUSE THAT HARBORS DEATH! ALL THE TENANTS IN IT WILL DIE!
IF I MUST GO--PERHAPS I CAN DESTROY THE LEADER, AND THROW THE REST INTO A CHAOS! AT LEAST--IT MAY SAVE THE LIVES OF OTHERS!

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ALL HIS MISERLY SELF-CENTERED LIFE, SEMPLE HAD AN UNSELFISH THOUGHT! PROMPTED BY MOTIVES OTHER THAN HIS OWN PRESERVATION, HE FLUNG THE STONE TABLET AT THE FACE OF THE LEADER!
YOU WON'T GO ON KILLING AND KILLING! THERE--!
WHOOM!
THE TABLET SHATTERED WITH AN EXPLOSIVE IMPACT -- THE CONCUSSION THRUSTING RIDGEDON INTO THE OUTSIDE! AND THERE -- BEFORE HIS ASTOUNDED EYES, HE SAW THE EARTH TREMBLE AND QUAKE AND OPEN A YAWNING MAW OF FLAME!
TH-THE STONE TABLET DESTROYED THEM! AS THOUGH I BROKE A SPELL! THEY ARE GONE -- AND MY FORTUNE ALONG WITH THEM!
AT LAST, SEMPLE RIDGEDON LEARNED -- THAT ANY EDIFICE BUILT UPON A FOUNDATION OF EVIL MUST ULTIMATELY CRUMBLE! AND SO IT IS -- THAT THE CULT OF THE THIRTEEN GHOSTS WALK THE EARTH NO MORE!

THE MONSTER'S GHOST!
BEWARE, ALL YOU WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN SPIRITS AND GHOSTS! ONCE I, TOO, SCORNED ANY MESSAGE FROM THE UNSEEN WORLD. I SPENT YEARS EXPOSING FAKE MEDIUMS AND GHOSTS... I ONCE OFFERED $5000 REWARD FOR THE SIGHT OF A REAL GHOST.
BAH! ONLY WIRES... TRICKERY. YOUR SPIRITS WERE CLUMSY FAKES!
BRUCE GIBSON, A CURSE ON YOU! SOME DAY YOU SHALL SEE MORE THAN YOUR EYES AND BRAIN CAN STAND! A CURSE ON YOU.
THEN, ONE DAY, WHEN I WAS BIDDING FOR AN OLD DESERTED COUNTRY HOUSE... A HAUNTED HOUSE... A DARK STRANGER WAS BIDDING AGAINST ME...
$1,000 MORE!
BUY NOT THE HOUSE! IT IS NOT A HOUSE FOR LIFE... BUT FOR DEATH!
AUCTION
SMITH
ESTATE AND SURROUNDING LAND
Help! Help me! While I am still only half-dead, while yet I am only half-ghost, let me tell my tale of terror and horror to you who are still lucky enough to be all-alive! This monster's ghost pursues me around the world! Please help me battle the dark and evil powers of this unseen phantom who was created
THE MONSTER'S GHOST!
THE BLACK STRANGER'S WORDS FELL LIKE ICE UPON MY HEART! I ALMOST FELT A STRANGE NEW THRILL! WAS IT... FEAR...? HORROR...?

Dark Mysteries #2, August-September 1951. Artist: Joe Orlando. Publisher: Master Comics.

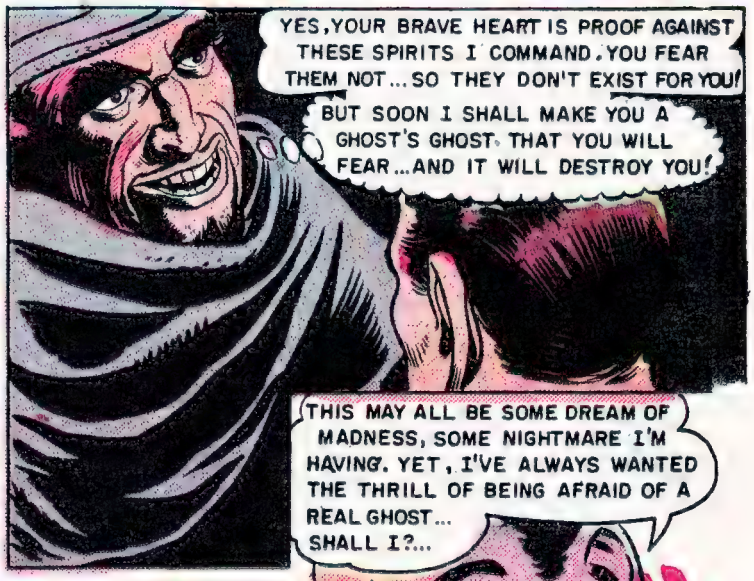
I BOUGHT THE HOUSE, AND MOVED RIGHT IN, NOT REALLY BELIEVING IN ANYTHING SUPERNATURAL. I EVEN TAUNTED THE BLACK STRANGER...
VISIT ME WITH SOME GHOSTS TONIGHT. YOU CAN COLLECT A REWARD IF YOU DO.
HE WON'T LAST LONG IN THAT HOUSE!
SOON I SETTLED MYSELF FOR THE NIGHT...WAITING...WAITING...
THE HOUSE IS STILL AS DEATH... AHH... I MEAN IT'S VERY STILL. HMM...WHAT'S THAT?
FROM BELOW ME, IN THE ROOTS OF THE HOUSE, I SEEMED TO FEEL AND HEAR A LOW OMINOUS THROBBING...LIKE BEATING DRUMS...
FAKE GHOST SOUNDS? IF THE GHOSTS WON'T COME TO ME, I'LL GO TO THEM!
SUDDENLY, THE DOOR BURST OPEN, AND I WHO HAD NEVER BELIEVED IN GHOSTS ALMOST LOST MY SENSES AS WHITE AND TRANSPARENT MESSENGERS OF DEATH CROWDED AROUND ME...
I MUST BE DREAMING! THIS CAN'T BE REAL!
WITH THE SPECTRES ALL AROUND ME, THERE CAME A VOICE I KNEW. THE ICY VOICE OF THE "DARK STRANGER" WHO HAD WANTED THIS 'HAUNTED' HOUSE...
YOUR DEATH WILL BE REAL, IF YOU STAY! GO, AND FORGET ALL YOU HAVE SEEN!
MY COURAGE FLOODED BACK INTO ME. THIS DARK STRANGER WAS TO ME ONLY A DISAPPOINTED HOUSE BUYER. I LAUGHED AND LAUGHED... THE SPECTRES VANISHED!
THAT WAS A NICE SHOW! WHAT ARE YOU, AN AMATEUR MAGICIAN?
WOULD YOU DARE VISIT ME... BELOW? I CAN SUMMON A GHOST FOR YOU... A MONSTER'S GHOST! DO YOU... DARE?
2

WARY, BUT STILL UNAFRAID, I ACCEPTED THAT STRANGE CHALLENGE! AFTER ALL, MY LIFE'S WORK HAD BEEN TO SEEK "REAL" GHOSTS...
DON'T ASK ME WHAT I AM! YOU MAY SOON KNOW...
...IF YOU AREN'T DEAD FIRST... AND FAST IN MY CLUTCHES!

BUT BEFORE THE END OF THE STAIRS, I WAS RUSHED BY EVERY SHAPE AND PHANTOM I HAD EVER READ ABOUT OR IMAGINED!
BEHOLD! MY LOYAL SERVANTS!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! MAYBE I HEAR THEM... BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

I DON'T BELIEVE IN THEM! THEY CAN'T BE TRUE!
MASTER, WE ARE POWERLESS! HIS WILL AND BRAIN DON'T CRACK!

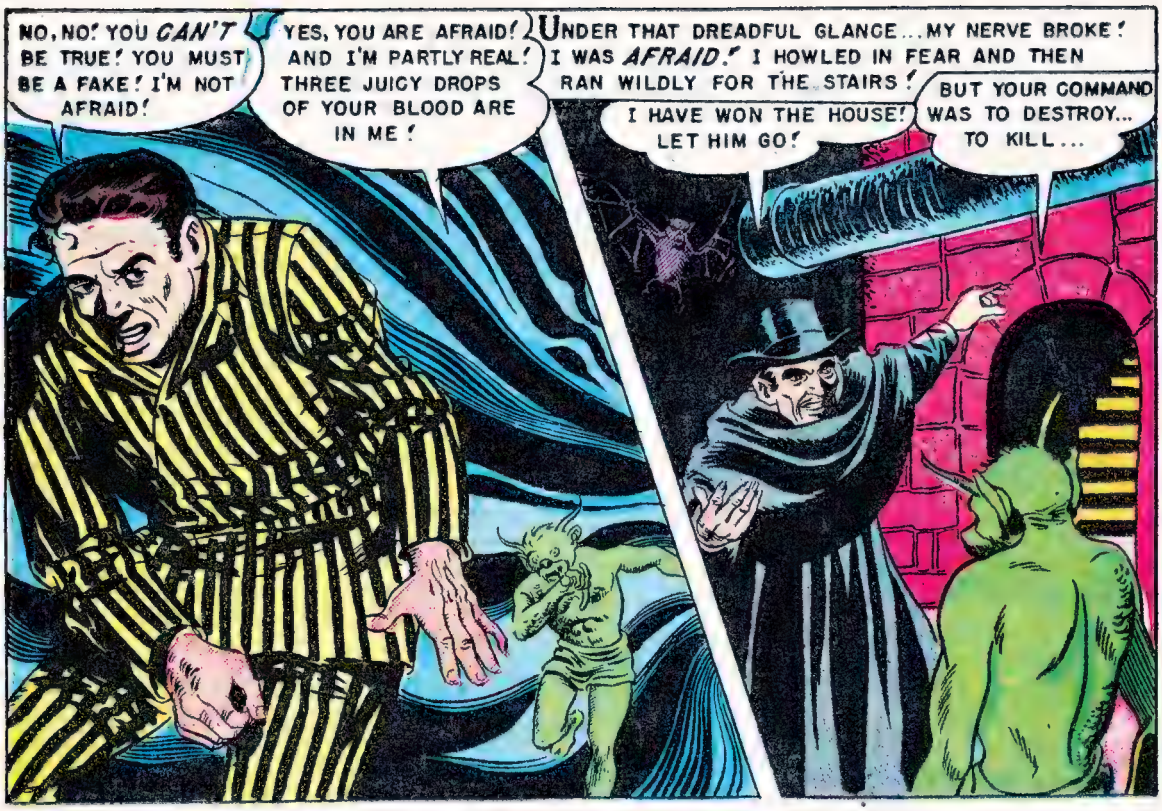
THEN... BEGONE! FLEE TO YOUR GRAVES, YOUR CRYPTS, YOUR DENS!
THEY DRAW BACK! I'M SAFE!


YES, YOUR BRAVE HEART IS PROOF AGAINST THESE SPIRITS I COMMAND. YOU FEAR THEM NOT... SO THEY DON'T EXIST FOR YOU!
BUT SOON I SHALL MAKE YOU A GHOST'S GHOST THAT YOU WILL FEAR... AND IT WILL DESTROY YOU!

THIS MAY ALL BE SOME DREAM OF MADNESS, SOME NIGHTMARE I'M HAVING. YET, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED THE THRILL OF BEING AFRAID OF A REAL GHOST... SHALL I?...

DO YOUR WORST, DARK STRANGER, WHOEVER YOU ARE. PRODUCE YOUR FAKE GHOST!
TO SUMMON IT... I NEED THREE DROPS OF YOUR BLOOD!
AGAIN I ALMOST FELT A TWINGE OF FEAR... BUT MY PRIDE AND THE "STRANGER" GOADED ME ON TO FOLLY!
AFRAID? NOT YOU! NOT THE FAMOUS GHOST HUNTER, BRUCE GIBSON! HAHAHAHA!
SO I GAVE THREE SHINING DROPS OF BLOOD... AND THEN MY BLACK COMPANION GAVE STRANGE ORDERS TO HIS HALF-VISIBLE SERVANTS...
THERE'S MY BLOOD! THIS GAME REALLY WILL AMUSE ME, I HOPE!
BRING ME THE NEWLY-DEAD BODIES OF FOUR MEN... AND THE CARCASS OF A NEWLY-SLAUGHTERED BLACK BULL!
WITHIN SECONDS, THE LUMINOUS SPECTERS DID HIS BIDDING...
BODIES! STILL WARM! AND THEY WERE ALL GREAT SINNERS!
SIRE, HERE IS THE FIERCEST BULL IN THE WORLD... AND THE SWORD THAT JUST KILLED HIM!
INTO THE GIANT CAULDRON WENT THE NEWLY-DEAD, AND THE BLACK BEAST, AND MY THREE DROPS OF BLOOD! A RED-PURPLE SMOKE AND STENCH ROSE FROM THE CAULDRON...
JOIN AND MOULD ONE MONSTER'S GHOST! ALIVE AND DEAD, SEEN AND UNSEEN!
OUT OF THE CAULDRON ROSE A BEAST BEYOND ALL HORRIBLE IMAGININGS!
I DESTROY YOU... BEFORE YOU CAN LIVE! NOW YOU ARE A GHOST'S GHOST... A MONSTER'S GHOST... WITH POWER TO HUNT ALL LIVING MEN! BE SEEN AND UNSEEN! AND DESTROY! DESTROY!
4

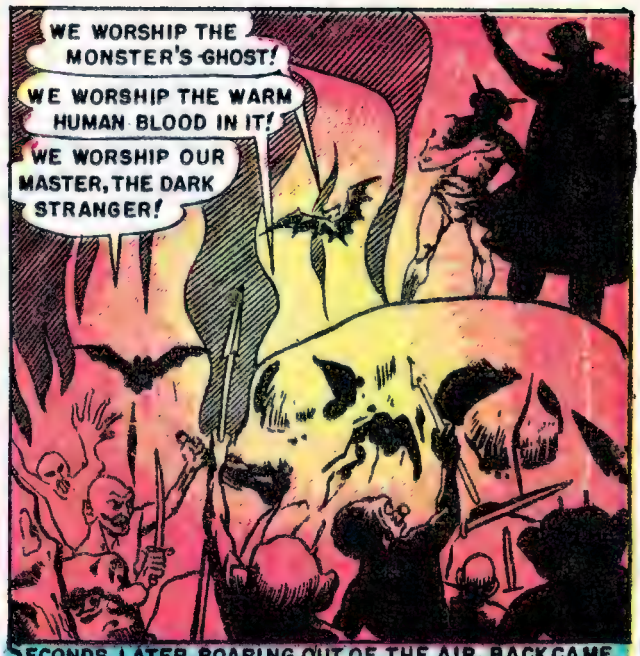
THE MONSTER LIVES AND DIES...THEN HIS GHOST TAKES SHAPE...
I WAS MADE OF LIFE... AND RED BLOOD!
I WAS MADE OF DEATH... DEAD BODIES!
SLOWLY, THE MONSTER JOINED ITS TWO HORRIBLE BODIES...
FEED ON LIFE AND DEATH! FEAST AND GORGE!
I HUNGER! I MUST EAT!
THEN I SAW THE WEIRDEST FEAST...THE DREADFUL ORGY OF THE MONSTER'S GHOST...
I FEED ON GHOSTS AND DEAD SOULS... ON BONES... ON DEATH!
OOOHHH!
OOOHHH!
OOHHH!
THEN THE LOATHSOME GHOST—BEAST MUST HAVE SCENTED MY LIVING BODY OR SENSED THE LOUD THROBBING OF MY HEART....
I CRINGED IN HORROR AS THE BRUTE-GHOST SPRANG TOWARD ME!
AHH! I SMELL RED BLOOD! THE SAME RED BLOOD THAT MADE ME!
I'LL DEVOUR YOU!
NOW ARE YOU AFRAID? NOW DO YOU BELIEVE IN.. GHOSTS?
5


NO, NO! YOU CAN'T BE TRUE! YOU MUST BE A FAKE! I'M NOT AFRAID!
YES, YOU ARE AFRAID! AND I'M PARTLY REAL! THREE JUICY DROPS OF YOUR BLOOD ARE IN ME!
UNDER THAT DREADFUL GLANCE...MY NERVE BROKE! I WAS AFRAID! I HOWLED IN FEAR AND THEN RAN WILDLY FOR THE STAIRS!
I HAVE WON THE HOUSE! LET HIM GO!
BUT YOUR COMMAND WAS TO DESTROY... TO KILL...

FORGET THAT WEAK FOOL! I HAVE OTHER WORK FOR YOU! SOON THE TWIN WORLDS OF LIFE-AND-DEATH WILL BE OURS! THE EVIL-MAGIC STONE OF LIFE-DEATH IS BURIED... HERE!

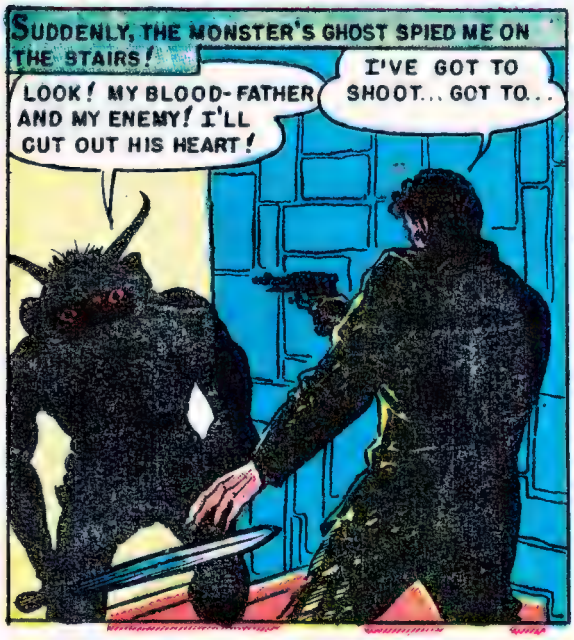
THAT'S WHY OUR MASTER HAD TO GET THIS HOUSE!
WE CAN MAKE ARMIES OF MONSTER-GHOSTS FROM THE THREE BLOOD DROPS IN YOU! WE'LL COMMAND THE WORLD!
AS I BURST INTO THE NIGHT AIR, I REMEMBERED THE PISTOL I ALWAYS CARRIED. COULD IT WIPE OUT A MONSTER'S GHOST?
AM I MAD? IT CAN'T BE... AND YET I MUST DESTROY THAT MONSTER BORN OF MY BLOOD... DARE I GO BACK!

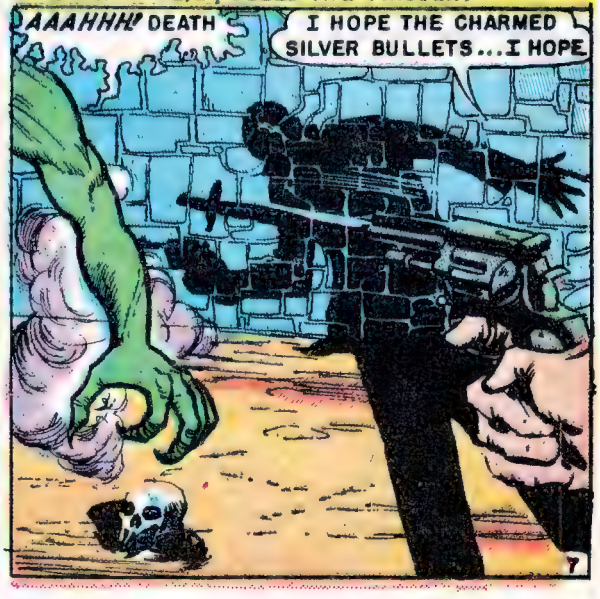
SLOWLY, STRUGGLING WITH MY FAILING COURAGE I CREPT BACK DOWN THE SLIMY STAIRS...
THIS GUN'S BULLETS ARE CHARMED... MADE OF SOLID SILVER AND I ONCE THOUGHT ALL SUCH STUFF WAS ONLY IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION!


WE WORSHIP THE MONSTER'S GHOST!
WE WORSHIP THE WARM HUMAN BLOOD IN IT!
WE WORSHIP OUR MASTER, THE DARK STRANGER!

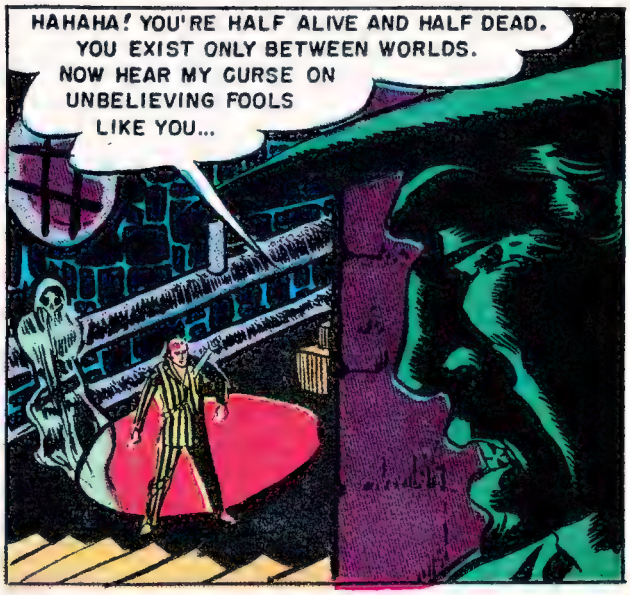
MONSTER GHOST, VANISH! BRING ME A NEW VICTIM!
I FADE, I VANISH, I FLY! I'LL BRING BACK A FRESH CORPSE!

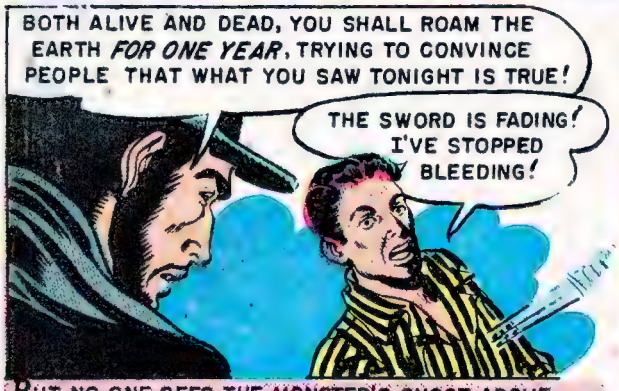
SECONDS LATER, ROARING OUT OF THE AIR, BACK CAME THE MONSTER'S GHOST...
A MISER! A NICE, JUICY MISER!
I'LL MAKE A THOUSAND MORE MONSTERS' GHOSTS WITH THEM, I CAN CONQUER THE WORLD!

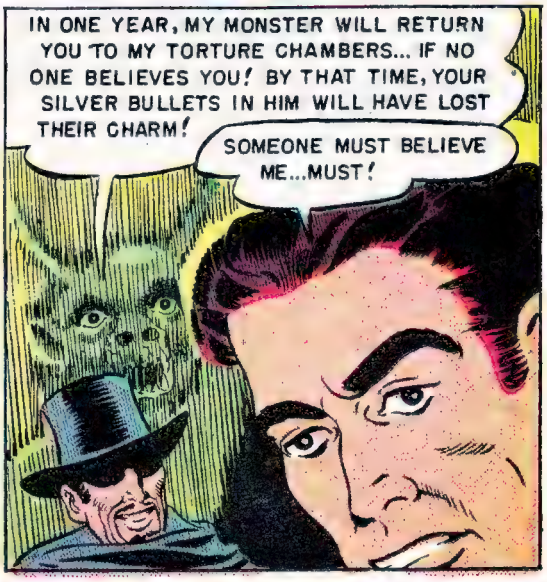

SUDDENLY, THE MONSTER'S GHOST SPIED ME ON THE STAIRS!
LOOK! MY BLOOD-FATHER AND MY ENEMY! I'LL CUT OUT HIS HEART!
I'VE GOT TO SHOOT... GOT TO...


AS THE MONSTER'S GHOST CAME FLYING THROUGH THE AIR AT ME, I PULLED THE TRIGGER!
AAAHHH! DEATH
I HOPE THE CHARMED SILVER BULLETS... I HOPE
7

HOURS LATER I CAME TO, A DEMON'S LAUGHTER RINGING IN MY EARS!
OHHH! THERE'S A SWORD IN ME... AND YET I'M ALIVE!
HAHAHA!


HAHAHA! YOU'RE HALF ALIVE AND HALF DEAD. YOU EXIST ONLY BETWEEN WORLDS. NOW HEAR MY CURSE ON UNBELIEVING FOOLS LIKE YOU...


BOTH ALIVE AND DEAD, YOU SHALL ROAM THE EARTH *FOR ONE YEAR*, TRYING TO CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT WHAT YOU SAW TONIGHT IS TRUE!
THE SWORD IS FADING! I'VE STOPPED BLEEDING!

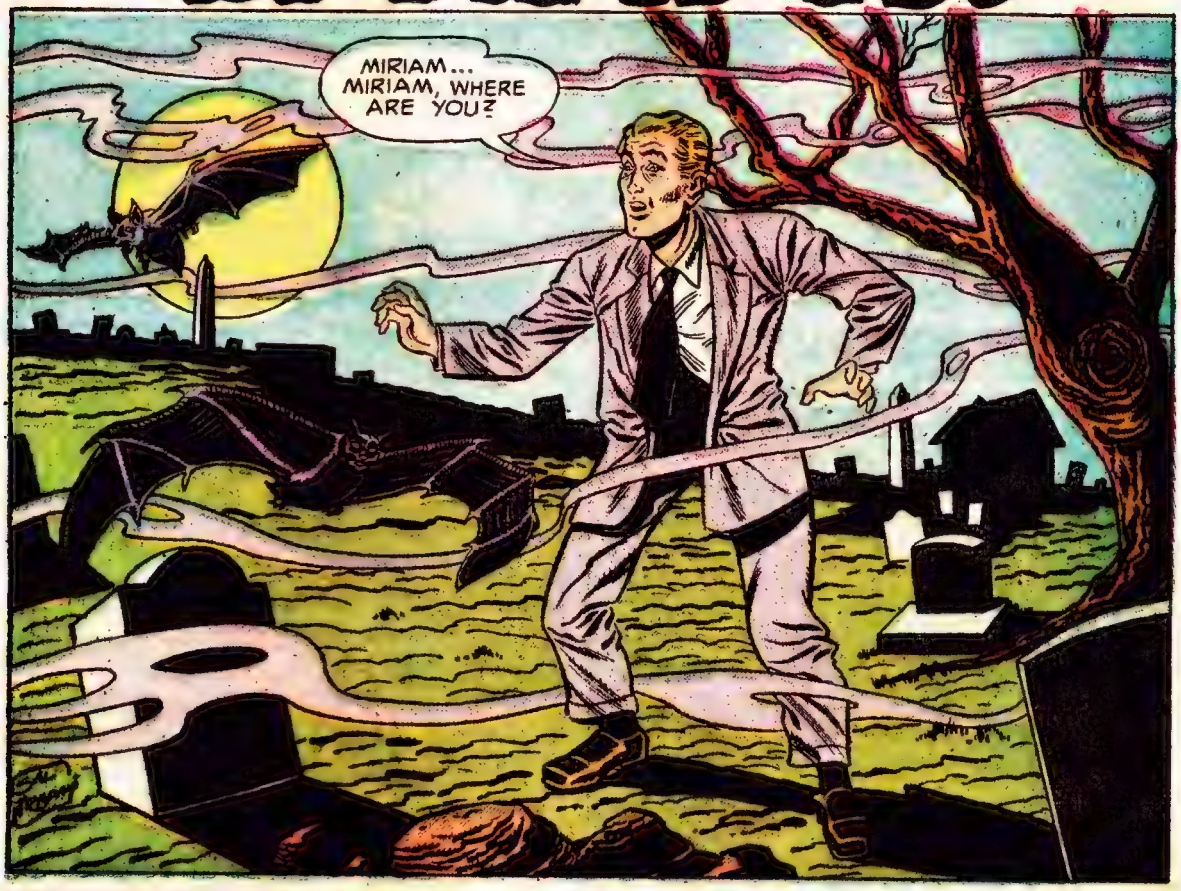

IN ONE YEAR, MY MONSTER WILL RETURN YOU TO MY TORTURE CHAMBERS... IF NO ONE BELIEVES YOU! BY THAT TIME, YOUR SILVER BULLETS IN HIM WILL HAVE LOST THEIR CHARM!
SOMEONE MUST BELIEVE ME...MUST!

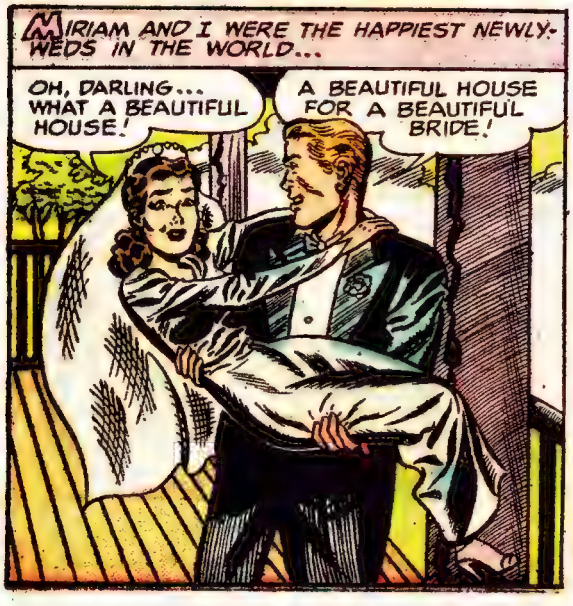
BUT NO ONE SEES THE MONSTER'S GHOST ABOVE ME... OR THE SWORD IN MY HEART...
GO AWAY, YOU'RE DRUNK OR CRAZY!
YOU AND YOUR FOOL STORIES!

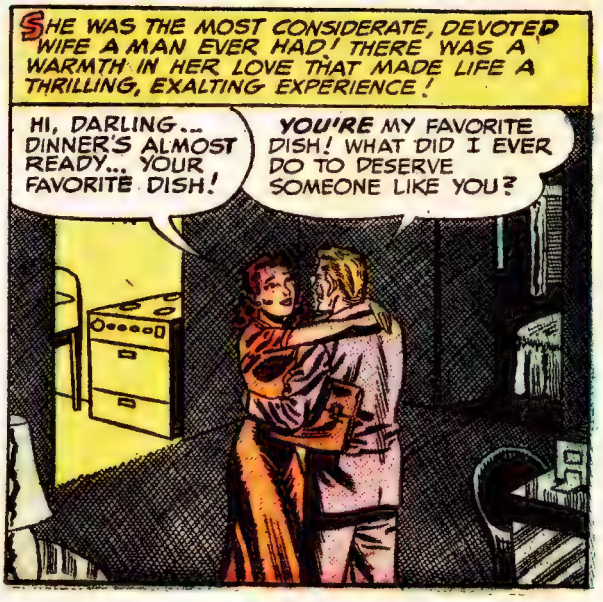
IN ONLY 13 MORE DAYS THE MONSTER'S GHOST WILL CARRY ME BACK TO THE DARK STRANGER! WON'T ANYBODY BELIEVE ME... TRY TO SAVE ME?
IF *YOU* MEET ME ON THE STREET... EVEN IF YOU DON'T SEE THE MONSTER'S GHOST OR THIS SWORD IN MY HEART... WON'T YOU BELIEVE MY STORY? PLEASE...!!
THE END

IT IS FORTUNATE INDEED THAT EULOGIES TO THE DEAD ARE WRITTEN BY THE LIVING... FOR HOW DIFFERENT IT WOULD BE IF THE CORPSE COULD WRITE ITS OWN...

EPITAPH!



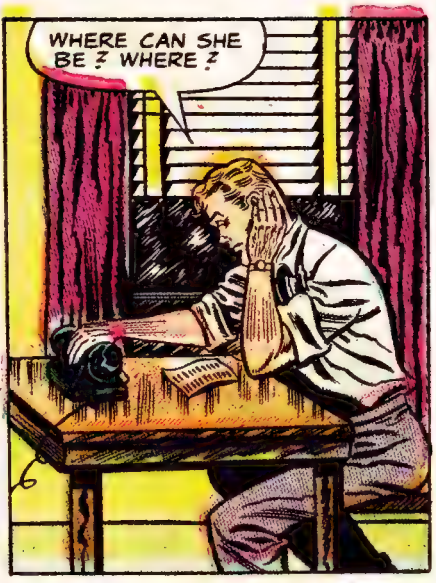

MIRIAM AND I WERE THE HAPPIEST NEWLY-WEDS IN THE WORLD...
OH, DARLING... WHAT A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE!
A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE FOR A BEAUTIFUL BRIDE!


SHE WAS THE MOST CONSIDERATE, DEVOTED WIFE A MAN EVER HAD! THERE WAS A WARMTH IN HER LOVE THAT MADE LIFE A THRILLING, EXALTING EXPERIENCE!
HI, DARLING... DINNER'S ALMOST READY... YOUR FAVORITE DISH!
YOU'RE MY FAVORITE DISH! WHAT DID I EVER DO TO DESERVE SOMEONE LIKE YOU?

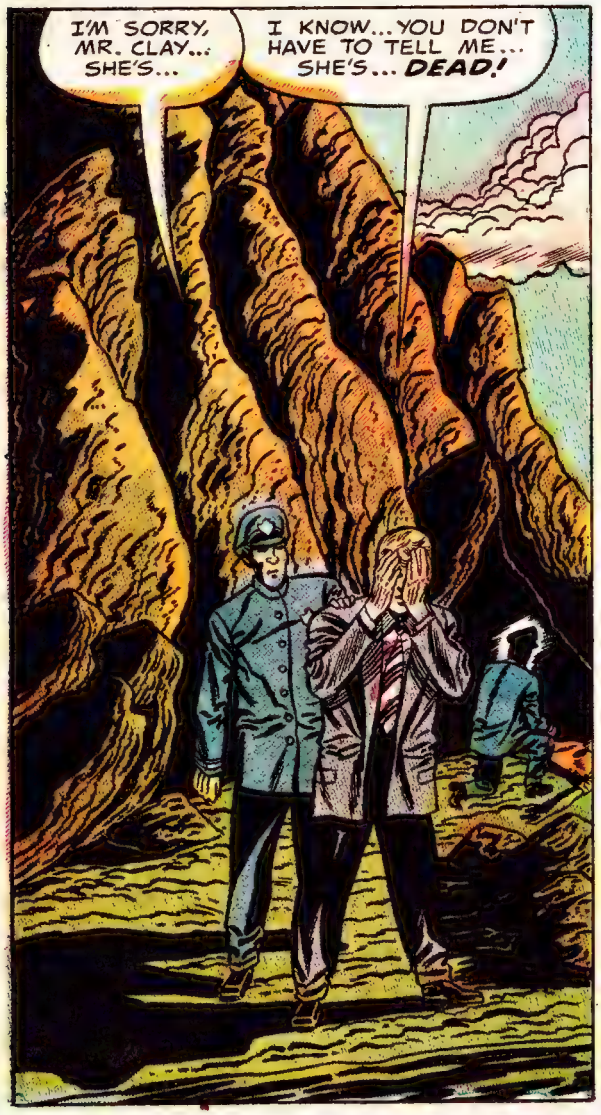
Weird Mysteries #9, March 1954. Artist: Sal Trapani. Publisher: Key Publications.

BUT ONE DAY, AFTER ONLY SIX MONTHS OF WEDDED BLISS, I CAME HOME AND MIRIAM WAS NOT AT HOME TO GREET ME! THERE WAS PANIC IN MY HEART... A TERRIBLE PREMONITION OF DISASTER...

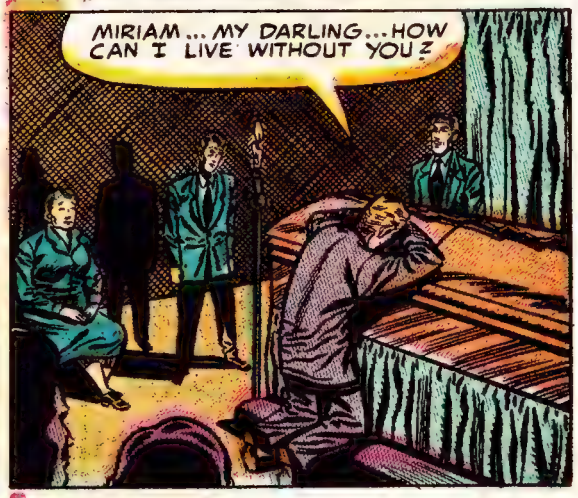
FRANTICALLY I SEARCHED THE HOUSE! THERE WAS NO NOTE OR ANYTHING! I CALLED ALL THE PLACES SHE MIGHT BE AT... FRIENDS, RELATIVES... FINALLY I CALLED THE POLICE, HOPING AGAINST HOPE THAT MIRIAM WOULD COME WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR BEFORE THEY ARRIVED, AND YET FEELING DEEP INSIDE THAT SOME TRAGEDY HAD BEFALLEN HER...



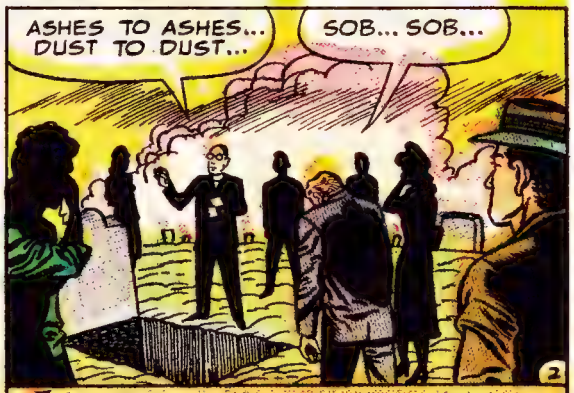
THEY FOUND HER BATTERED BODY AMONGST THE ROCKS AT THE FOOT OF THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN...



NO MAN WAS EVER SO GRIEF-STRICKEN AS I... IT WAS AS THOUGH A PART OF ME HAD DIED WITH HER... MIRIAM, MY MIRIAM WAS GONE... ALL THE HAPPINESS AND JOY AND WARMTH AND LOVE WERE GONE... GONE FOREVER...

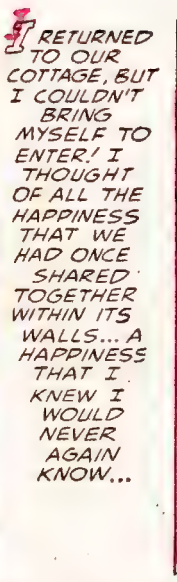


I WATCHED THEM BURY HER... AND WITH HER, MY HEART... THE TEARS FLOWED FREELY DOWN MY CHEEKS AS I WEPT UNCONTROLLABLY... UNASHAMED...



I HAD THIS EPITAPH INSCRIBED ON HER GRAVESTONE: **NO GREATER LOVE DID MAN EVER RECEIVE FROM WOMAN!**

MY FRIENDS TRIED TO EXTEND THEIR SYMPATHY, BUT MY SORROW WAS INCONSOLABLE! AT LAST THEY LEFT ME TO MYSELF...
POOR EDGAR... WHAT A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY!
YES... HE'LL NEVER FIND ANOTHER GIRL LIKE HER! SHE WAS ONE IN A MILLION!

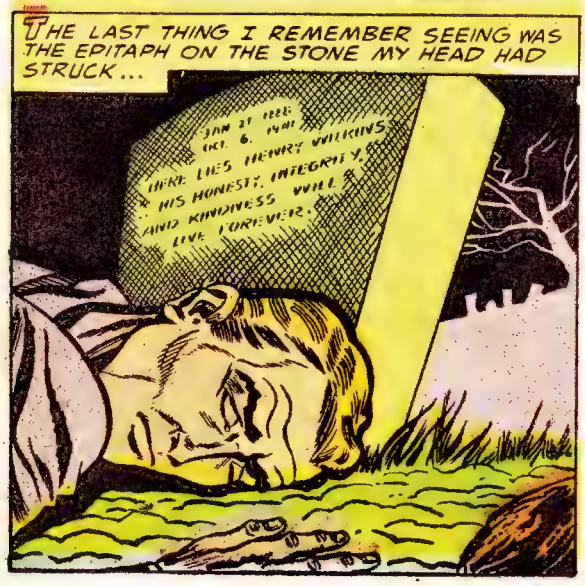

I RETURNED TO OUR COTTAGE, BUT I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO ENTER! I THOUGHT OF ALL THE HAPPINESS THAT WE HAD ONCE SHARED TOGETHER WITHIN ITS WALLS... A HAPPINESS THAT I KNEW I WOULD NEVER AGAIN KNOW...

NO, NO! I CAN'T... THE EMPTINESS... I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO STAND IT!

SUDDENLY I HAD A POWERFUL LONGING TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT HER GRAVE... TO MOURN AND WEEP AND POUR OUT MY ANGUISH... TO BE WITH HER FOR JUST ONE MORE NIGHT...
AFTER DARK... THE PLACE WILL BE DESERTED... NO ONE WILL SEE...

BUT IN THE DARK, I COULDN'T FIND IT... I COULDN'T FIND MIRIAM'S GRAVE! FRANTICALLY I SEARCH AMONG THE GRAVES WINDING MY WAY THROUGH THE LABYRINTH OF STONES AND MARKERS...
WHERE IS IT? I KNOW IT'S OVER THIS WAY... IT MUST BE!

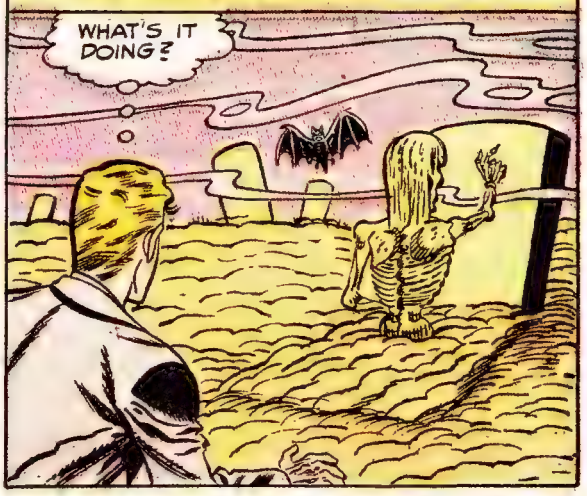
I STUMBLED... FELL... THERE WAS A SHARP, SEARING PAIN ON THE SIDE OF MY HEAD...


THE LAST THING I REMEMBER SEEING WAS THE EPITAPH ON THE STONE MY HEAD HAD STRUCK...
HERE LIES HENRY WILKINS
HIS HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND KINDNESS WILL LIVE FOREVER!

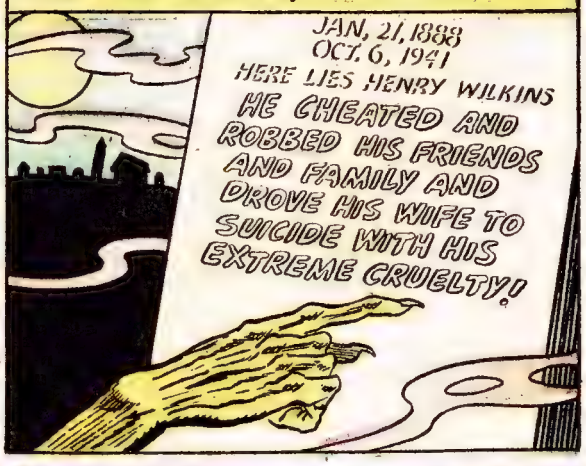
HOW LONG I REMAINED UNCONSCIOUS, I CANNOT SAY... BUT SUDDENLY I WAS AWAKENED BY A STRANGE RUMBLING BENEATH THE SPOT WHERE I LAY... IT WAS A WEIRD, STARTLING SENSATION...
WHAT'S THAT? THE GRAVE SEEMS TO BE MOVING!

I SPRANG UP AND LEAPED BACKWARDS... AND NONE TOO SOON... FOR JUST THEN THE MOST FANTASTIC THING OCCURRED. A HORRIBLE, HALF DECOMPOSED CORPSE ROSE STRAIGHT UP FROM THE GRAVE AND SEEMED TO BE READING THE INSCRIPTION ON ITS OWN HEADSTONE...

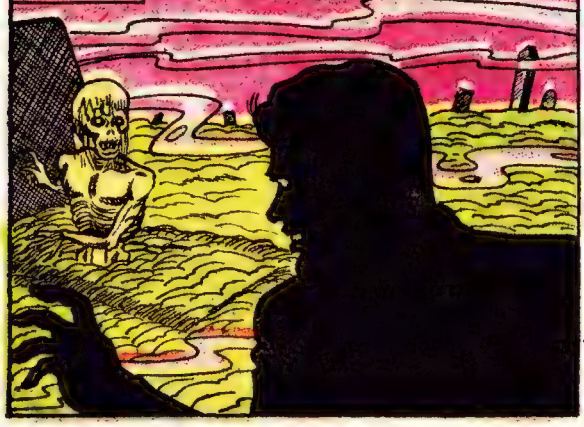
SUDDENLY IT BEGAN TO MOVE ITS HAND ACROSS THE FACE OF THE STONE AS THOUGH IT WERE WRITING SOMETHING...



... WITH THE POINT OF ITS FINGER, IT HAD WRITTEN IN LARGE IRRIDESCANT LETTERS A NEW EPITAPH, OBLITERATING THE ORIGINAL ONE. WHERE BEFORE IT HAD READ "**HIS HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND KINDNESS WILL LIVE FOREVER,**" NOW IT READ...


JAN. 21, 1888
OCT. 6, 1941
HERE LIES HENRY WILKINS
HE CHEATED AND ROBBED HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND DROVE HIS WIFE TO SUICIDE WITH HIS EXTREME CRUELTY!

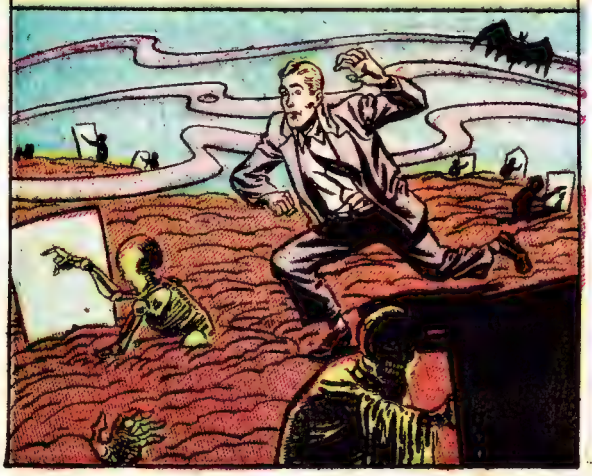
IT WAS UNBELIEVABLE... A CORPSE CORRECTING ITS OWN EPITAPH... I TRIED TO SHAKE OFF THE VISION BUT IT PERSISTED! SUDDENLY IT TURNED AND FACED ME... ITS COLD DEAD EYES FIXED IN AN UNBLINKING, TERRIFYING GAZE...



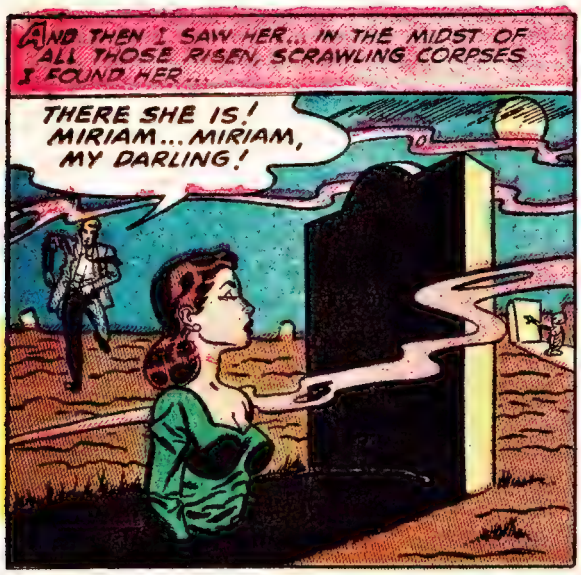
IN PANIC, I TURNED TO RUN WHEN THE HORROR OF ALL HORRORS GREETED MY EYES...

FROM OUT OF EVERY GRAVE HAD RISEN ITS OCCUPANT... SOME HALF DECAYED... SOME PARTLY DISMEMBERED... OTHERS SHOWING THE BEGINNINGS OF DECOMPOSITION. IT WAS A MACABRE PANORAMA OF THE DEAD... AND EACH WAS INSCRIBING ON HIS TOMBSTONE HIS OWN EPITAPH... BARING HIS SOUL IN CONFESSION...

SUDDENLY I THOUGHT OF MIRIAM... MY BELOVED MIRIAM... SHE TOO MUST BE ASCENDED FROM THE GRAVE...ONCE AGAIN I WOULD FEAST MY EYES ON HER LOVELINESS...

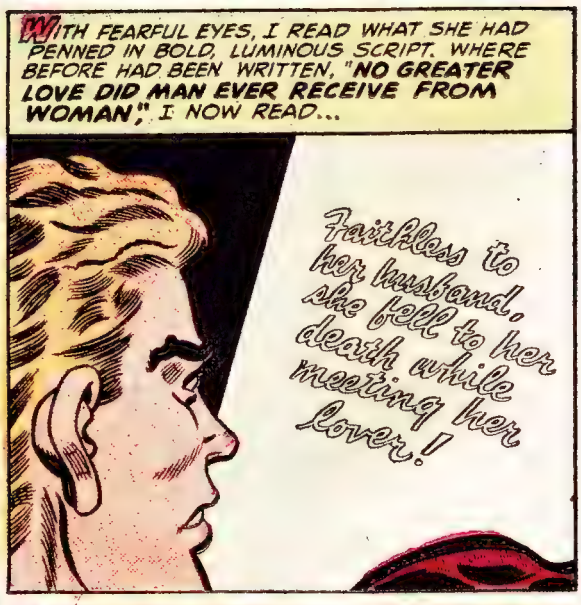


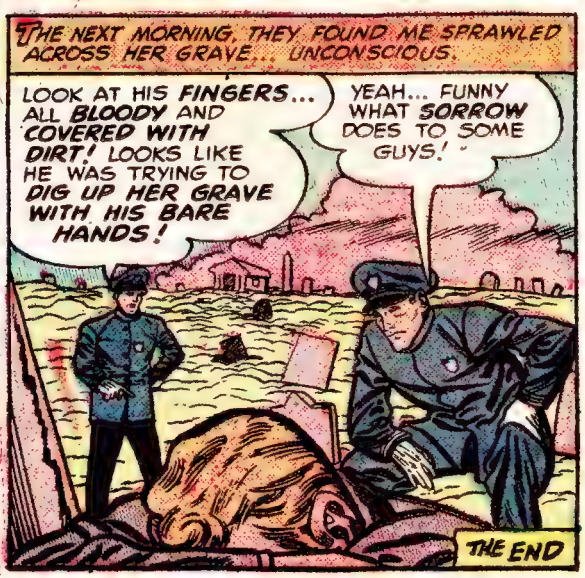
DESPERATELY I RAN AMONGST THE GRAVES, DODGING THE HORRIBLE SPECTRES OF THE DEAD... SEARCHING, SEARCHING FOR THE FACE I SO ADORED...

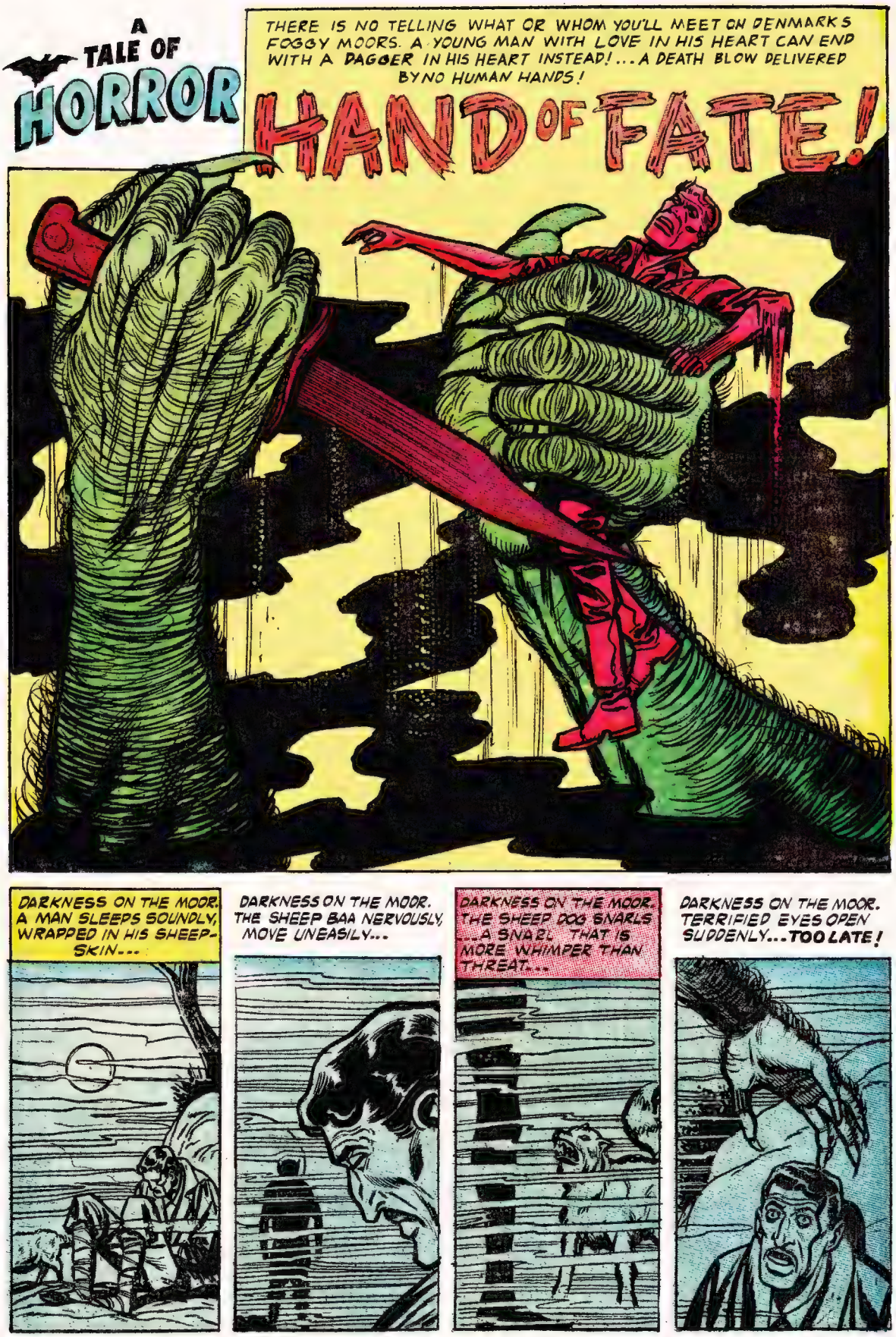

AND THEN I SAW HER... IN THE MIDST OF ALL THOSE RISEN, SCRAWLING CORPSES I FOUND HER...
THERE SHE IS! MIRIAM... MIRIAM, MY DARLING!

I RAN TO HER SIDE, CALLING HER NAME... BUT SHE NEITHER SAW NOR HEARD...
MIRIAM... IT'S I, EDGAR, WHO LOVES YOU AND WHOM...

MIRIAM, TOO, WAS REWRITING HER EPITAPH... HER INDEX FINGER MAKING GRACEFUL CIRCLES OVER THE FACE OF HER GRAVESTONE...

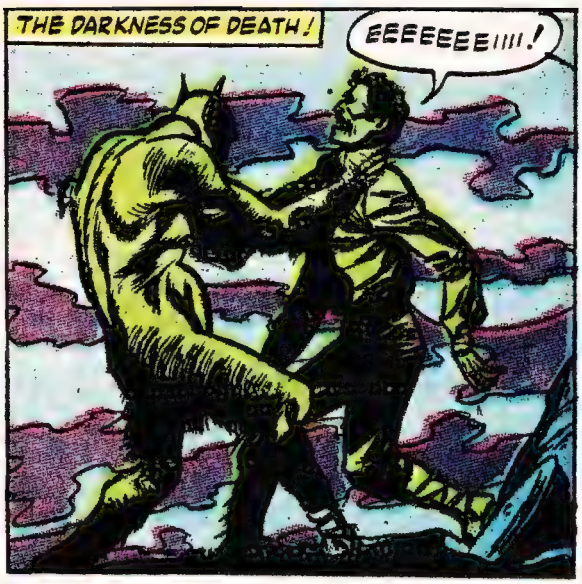

WITH FEARFUL EYES, I READ WHAT SHE HAD PENNED IN BOLD, LUMINOUS SCRIPT. WHERE BEFORE HAD BEEN WRITTEN, "NO GREATER LOVE DID MAN EVER RECEIVE FROM WOMAN," I NOW READ...
Faithless to her husband, she fell to her death while meeting her lover!


THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND ME SPRAWLED ACROSS HER GRAVE... UNCONSCIOUS.
LOOK AT HIS FINGERS... ALL BLOODY AND COVERED WITH DIRT! LOOKS LIKE HE WAS TRYING TO DIG UP HER GRAVE WITH HIS BARE HANDS!
YEAH... FUNNY WHAT SORROW DOES TO SOME GUYS!
THE END

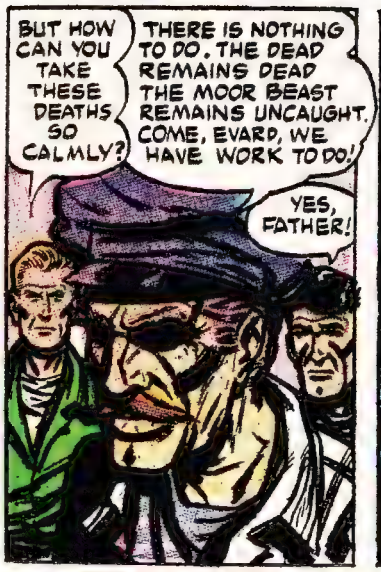

A TALE OF HORROR
THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT OR WHOM YOU'LL MEET ON DENMARK'S FOGGY MOORS. A YOUNG MAN WITH LOVE IN HIS HEART CAN END WITH A DAGGER IN HIS HEART INSTEAD!... A DEATH BLOW DELIVERED BY NO HUMAN HANDS!
HAND OF FATE!
DARKNESS ON THE MOOR. A MAN SLEEPS SOUNDLY, WRAPPED IN HIS SHEEP-SKIN...
DARKNESS ON THE MOOR. THE SHEEP BAA NERVOUSLY, MOVE UNEASILY...
DARKNESS ON THE MOOR. THE SHEEP DOG SNARLS ...A SNARL THAT IS MORE WHIMPER THAN THREAT...
DARKNESS ON THE MOOR. TERRIFIED EYES OPEN SUDDENLY...TOO LATE!

Tales of Horror #5, March 1953. Pencils: Moe Marcus; inks attributed to Rocco Mastroserio. Publisher: Toby.

DARKNESS FALLS


THE DARKNESS OF DEATH!
EEEEEEE!!!!!

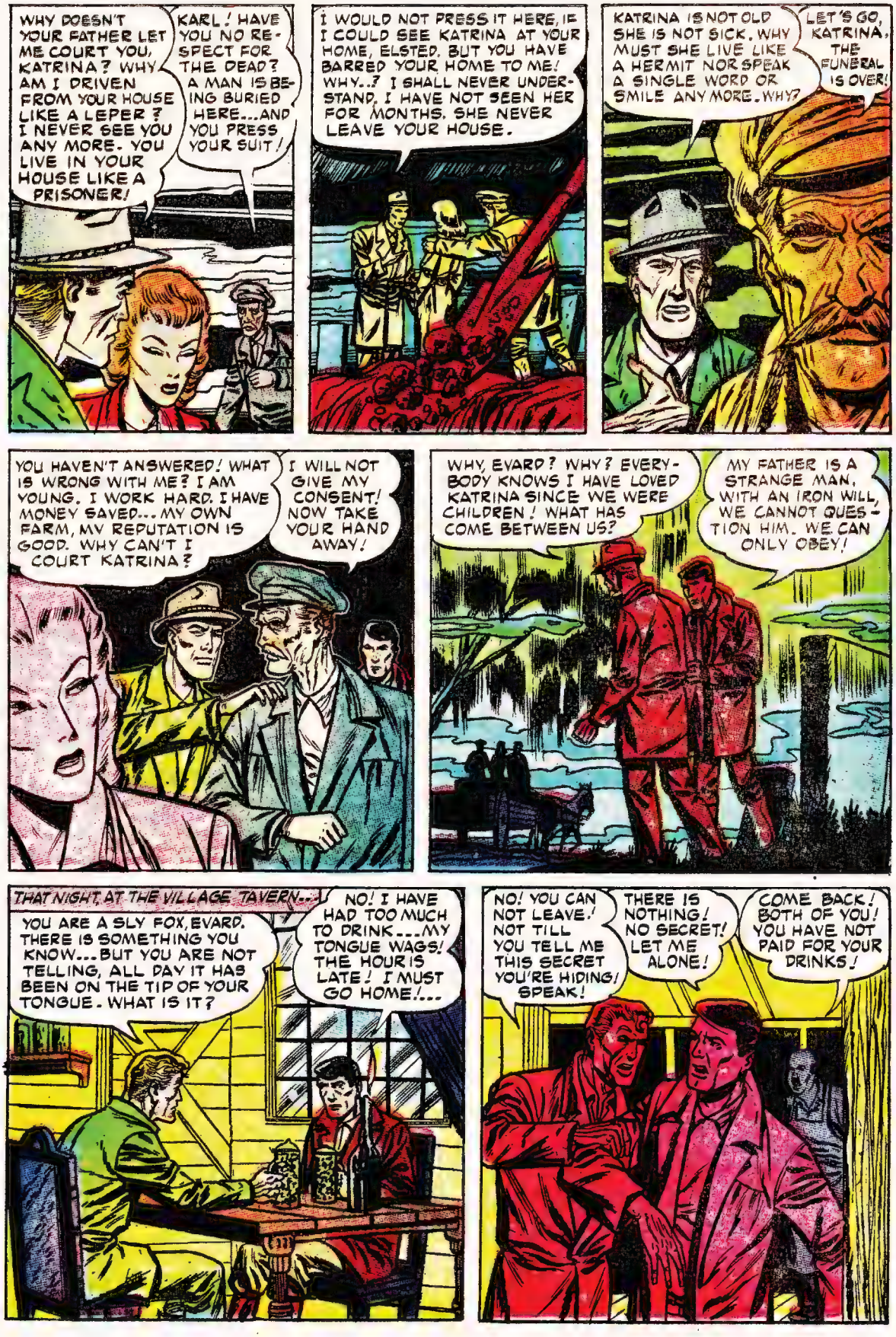
HOURS LATER, WHEN THE DARKNESS FADED INTO MORNING...
ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE BEAST! THAT MAKES THREE THIS MONTH!
AND ALL THREE MEMBERS OF YOUR FARM, ELSTED! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
THERE IS NOTHING TO DO. I'LL BURY THE DEAD...AND LOOK FOR ANOTHER SHEPARD!


BUT HOW CAN YOU TAKE THESE DEATHS SO CALMLY?
THERE IS NOTHING TO DO. THE DEAD REMAINS DEAD THE MOOR BEAST REMAINS UNCAUGHT. COME, EVARD, WE HAVE WORK TO DO!
YES, FATHER!

JUST WHAT IS THE MOOR BEAST, FATHER?
I DO NOT KNOW. THE OLD ONES SAY THE BEAST IS SOMETHING NOT DEAD NOR YET ALIVE. NOT MAN... NOR AN ANIMAL. HOW SHALL I, AN IGNORANT FARMER, KNOW?

IT IS BETTER NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT LIES BEYOND THE SIGHT OF MEN...BEYOND THEIR REASON! ABOVE ALL, DO NOT MENTION THIS DEATH TO THE WOMEN. DEATH UPSETS YOUR MOTHER, EVARD.
YES, FATHER!

THE FOLLOWING DAY, IN THE GRAVEYARD...
ASHES TO ASHES AND DUST TO DUST...
FATHER! LOOK! KARL HANSEN... HE IS TRYING TO MAKE KATRINA TALK TO HIM!...
THE STUBBORN FOOL! HE WILL SEIZE ANY OPPOTUNITY TO FURTHER HIS SUIT... EVEN IN A GRAVEYARD!


WHY DOESN'T YOUR FATHER LET ME COURT YOU, KATRINA? WHY AM I DRIVEN FROM YOUR HOUSE LIKE A LEPER? I NEVER SEE YOU ANY MORE. YOU LIVE IN YOUR HOUSE LIKE A PRISONER!
KARL! HAVE YOU NO RESPECT FOR THE DEAD? A MAN IS BEING BURIED HERE...AND YOU PRESS YOUR SUIT!
I WOULD NOT PRESS IT HERE, IF I COULD SEE KATRINA AT YOUR HOME, ELSTED. BUT YOU HAVE BARRED YOUR HOME TO ME! WHY..? I SHALL NEVER UNDERSTAND. I HAVE NOT SEEN HER FOR MONTHS. SHE NEVER LEAVE YOUR HOUSE.
KATRINA IS NOT OLD SHE IS NOT SICK. WHY MUST SHE LIVE LIKE A HERMIT NOR SPEAK A SINGLE WORD OR SMILE ANY MORE. WHY?
LET'S GO, KATRINA. THE FUNERAL IS OVER!
YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED! WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME? I AM YOUNG. I WORK HARD. I HAVE MONEY SAVED... MY OWN FARM, MY REPUTATION IS GOOD. WHY CAN'T I COURT KATRINA?
I WILL NOT GIVE MY CONSENT! NOW TAKE YOUR HAND AWAY!
WHY, EVARD? WHY? EVERYBODY KNOWS I HAVE LOVED KATRINA SINCE WE WERE CHILDREN! WHAT HAS COME BETWEEN US?
MY FATHER IS A STRANGE MAN. WITH AN IRON WILL, WE CANNOT QUESTION HIM. WE CAN ONLY OBEY!
THAT NIGHT, AT THE VILLAGE TAVERN...
YOU ARE A SLY FOX, EVARD. THERE IS SOMETHING YOU KNOW...BUT YOU ARE NOT TELLING, ALL DAY IT HAS BEEN ON THE TIP OF YOUR TONGUE. WHAT IS IT?
NO! I HAVE HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK...MY TONGUE WAGS! THE HOUR IS LATE! I MUST GO HOME!...
NO! YOU CAN NOT LEAVE! NOT TILL YOU TELL ME THIS SECRET YOU'RE HIDING! SPEAK!
THERE IS NOTHING! NO SECRET! LET ME ALONE!
COME BACK! BOTH OF YOU! YOU HAVE NOT PAID FOR YOUR DRINKS!

LET GO, I TELL YOU. LET GO!
HERE! TAKE YOUR BLASTED MONEY! I'VE GOT TO GO AFTER HIM
YOU'LL NEVER FIND HIM NOW ...IN THAT FOG COME BACK, HANSEN!
HE KNOWS SOMETHING! AND HE IS GOING TO TELL ME WHAT IT IS!
EVARD! COME BACK! THIS IS KARL HANSEN! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU! EVARD!
EVARD!
EVARD! WHERE ARE YOU?
S-SOMETHING IS OUT THERE! W-WHO'S THERE? WHAT DO YO WANT?
GASP!
GRRRARRR!
E-EEY!!!EEE!

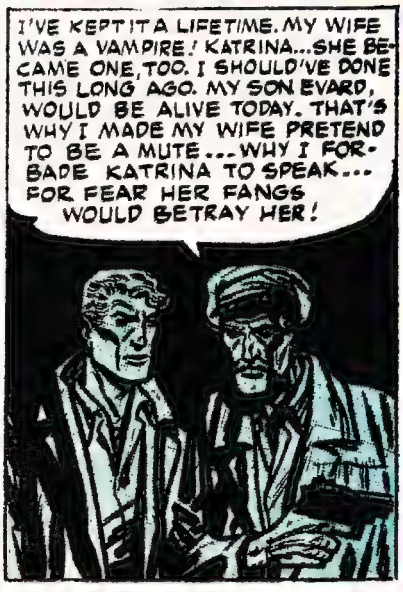
YAAAANA!
EVARD! HE'S IN TROUBEL...SOME BEAST MUST HAVE ATTACKED HIM!
EVARD! W-WHAT HAPP...(GASP!) GREAT HEAVENS!
GRRRRR!
YOU DEVILS!...YOU SHALL NOT FIND ME SO EASY A MARK!
YYEOEWWW!
ITITAAAA!
COME BACK HERE! COME BACK!
YYIIADOWW!
THERE IS NO SENSE FOLLOWING THEM! THE FOG SWALLOW THEM UP! I'LL NEVER FIND THEM AGAIN!
EVARD'S DEAD! HIS THROAT RIPPED OUT! AS IF THE BEAST INTEND TO SUCK THE BLOOD OUT OF HIS BODY! BUT THEY ARE NOT BEASTS!...THEY WALK ON TWO LEGS!
THE FOLLOWING DAY...
YOUR SON IS NOW DEAD, ELSTED. DO YOU STILL WANT TO DO NOTHING? THE MUDERERS ARE STILL AT LARGE!
THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO THE KILLERS ARE NOT HUMAN. MAN CANNOT FIGHT THE SUPERNATURAL!

BUT ELSTED..THESE BEAST ARE NOT SUPERNATURAL! I SLASHED ONE ON THE HAND. THE BEAST SCREAMED IN PAIN AND RAN FROM ME! I KICKED THE OTHER! AND IT'S BODY HAD SUBSTANCE. GHOST OR PHANTOMS DO NOT RUN FROM MEN. CREATURES FROM BEYOND DO NOT FEAR MERE MORTALS!
I HAVE SPOKEN. I WILL DO NOTHING. I HAVE BURIED MY SON. NOW I SHALL GO HOME!
WHAT AN OBSTINATE MAN! MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY... HIS WORKERS... ALL SLAIN... YET HE DOES NOTHING!
YOU'RE WRONG. ELSTED HAS A SECRET, EVARD KNEW THE SECRET. I WAS GOING TO FORCE HIM TO TELL IT TO ME WHEN HE DIED.
BUT IF ELSTED WON'T SPEAK...I KNOW SOMEBODY WHO WILL! KATRINA! I WILL QUIETLY STEAL INTO ELSTED HOUSE WHEN ELSTED IS AWAY! THEN I WILL LEARN ELSTED'S SECRET ONCE AND FOR ALL...FROM HER LIPS!
THAT NIGHT AS THE FOG ROLLED IN FROM THE SEA.
I GAVE ELSTED YOUR MESSAGE, KARL. SEE? HE LEAVES NOW FOR THE GRANGE MEETING... BUT WHAT WILL HE DO WHEN HE REACHES TOWN AND FIND THAT I HAVE LIED? HE WILL BE FURIOUS AT ME!
NEVER MIND. I'LL TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY! HERE'S SOMETHING FOR YOU! GO!
SHORTLY AFTER AT THE FARM HOUSE.
GASP!
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, KATRINA, IT'S ME. I HAD TO TALK TO YOU. STRANGE THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING THE PAST YEAR. THE STRANGEST HAS BEEN THE BEHAVIOR OF YOUR FATHER. HE WON'T LET ME NEAR YOU. WHY?
YOUR MOTHER HAS BEEN A MUTE EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER. BUT YOU... YOU USED TO TALK AND SMILE. WHY DON'T YOU TALK AND SMILE ANYMORE? EVEN NOW... THOUGH YOU'RE FRIGHTENED YOU DON'T CRY OUT.
WHY? THERE'S GOT TO BE AN ANSWER! SPEAK! YOU'RE GOING TO SPEAK... THERE'S A SECRET HERE AND I'M GOING TO FIND IT OUT, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST!

WHY DOESN'T YOUR FATHER LET ME COURT YOU? WHY DOESN'T HE TELL US WHAT HE KNOWS ABOUT THOSE MURDERS? SPEAK, KATRINA! I'M FORCING YOUR JAWS OPEN!

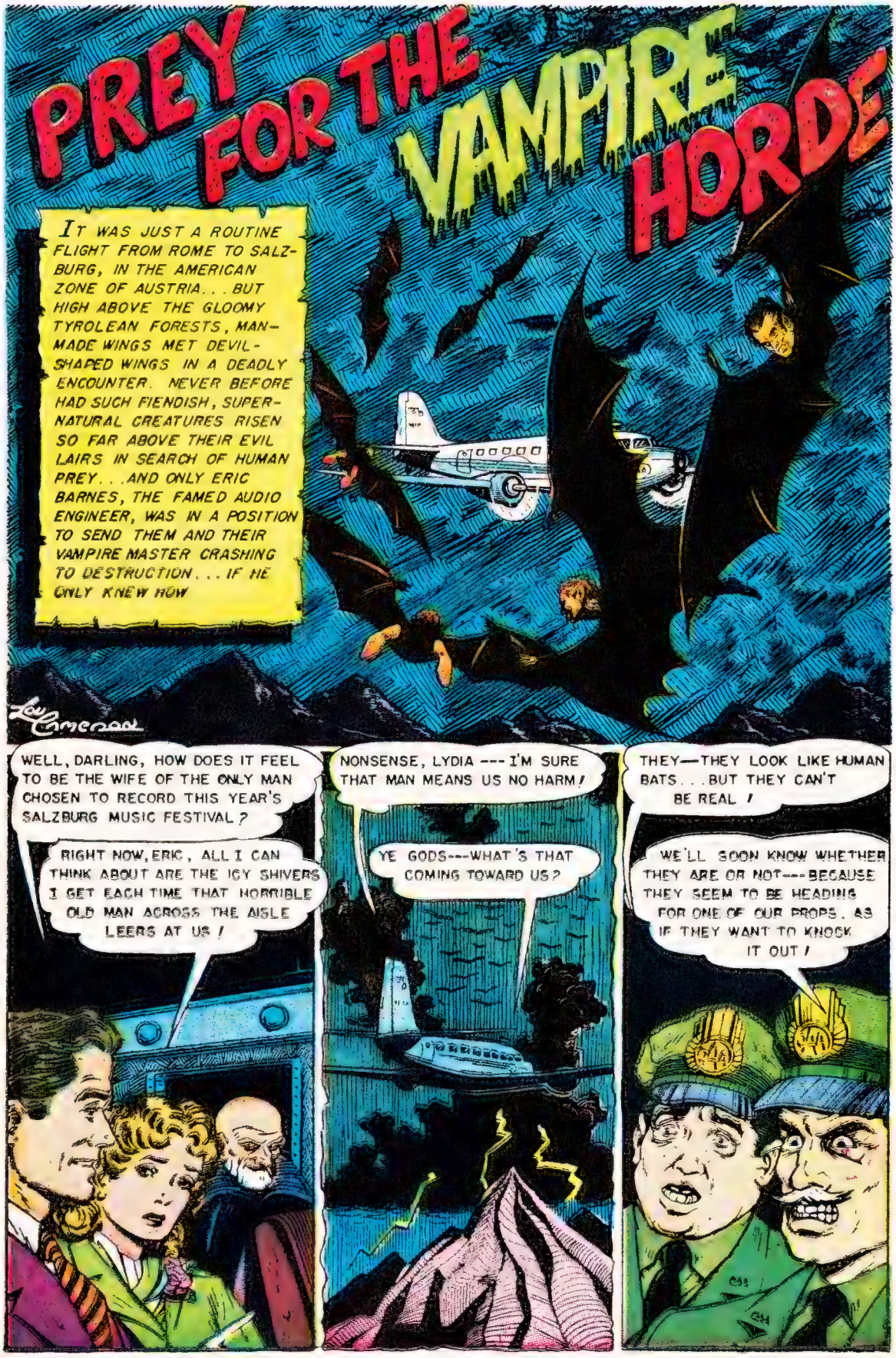
SUDDENLY... AS THE TWO MONSTERS WERE ABOUT TO RIP KARL HANSEN'S THROAT OUT....

ELSTED!
I MET ONE OF THE FARMERS DOWN THE ROAD. I LEARNED THERE WAS NO GRANGE MEETING, SO I CAME BACK, THINKING IT WAS A RUSE TO GET ME AWAY FROM THE HOUSE! NOW YOU KNOW MY SECRET!
BANG!
BANG!


I'VE KEPT IT A LIFETIME. MY WIFE WAS A VAMPIRE! KATRINA...SHE BECAME ONE, TOO. I SHOULD'VE DONE THIS LONG AGO. MY SON EVARD, WOULD BE ALIVE TODAY. THAT'S WHY I MADE MY WIFE PRETEND TO BE A MUTE...WHY I FORBADE KATRINA TO SPEAK... FOR FEAR HER FANGS WOULD BETRAY HER!

SLOWLY KARL HANSEN UNWRAPPED THE BANDAGE FROM THE GIRL HE LOVED. THERE, AS PLAIN AS DAY, WERE THREE DEEP SCARS. THE HAND HE SOUGHT IN MARRIAGE WAS THE HAND OF A MONSTER!

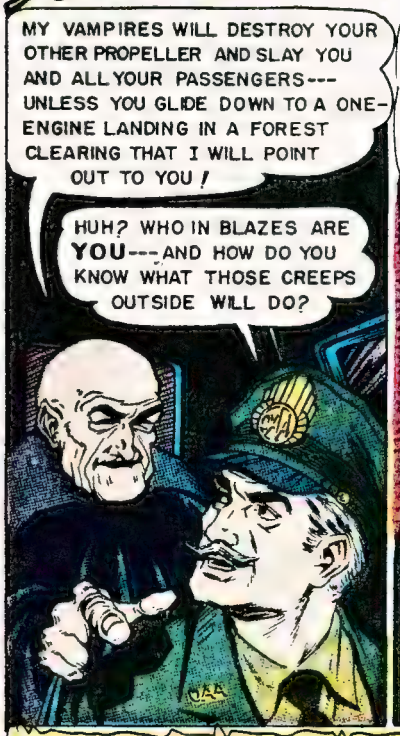
THE END


PREY FOR THE VAMPIRE HORDE
IT WAS JUST A ROUTINE FLIGHT FROM ROME TO SALZBURG, IN THE AMERICAN ZONE OF AUSTRIA... BUT HIGH ABOVE THE GLOOMY TYROLEAN FORESTS, MAN-MADE WINGS MET DEVIL-SHAPED WINGS IN A DEADLY ENCOUNTER. NEVER BEFORE HAD SUCH FIENDISH, SUPER-NATURAL CREATURES RISEN SO FAR ABOVE THEIR EVIL LAIRS IN SEARCH OF HUMAN PREY...AND ONLY ERIC BARNES, THE FAMED AUDIO ENGINEER, WAS IN A POSITION TO SEND THEM AND THEIR VAMPIRE MASTER CRASHING TO DESTRUCTION... IF HE ONLY KNEW HOW
Lou Cameron
WELL, DARLING, HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE WIFE OF THE ONLY MAN CHOSEN TO RECORD THIS YEAR'S SALZBURG MUSIC FESTIVAL?
RIGHT NOW, ERIC, ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT ARE THE ICY SHIVERS I GET EACH TIME THAT HORRIBLE OLD MAN ACROSS THE AISLE LEERS AT US!
NONSENSE, LYDIA --- I'M SURE THAT MAN MEANS US NO HARM!
YE GODS---WHAT'S THAT COMING TOWARD US?
THEY—THEY LOOK LIKE HUMAN BATS...BUT THEY CAN'T BE REAL!
WE'LL SOON KNOW WHETHER THEY ARE OR NOT---BECAUSE THEY SEEM TO BE HEADING FOR ONE OF OUR PROPS. AS IF THEY WANT TO KNOCK IT OUT!

The Beyond #22, September 1953. Artist: Lou Cameron. Publisher: Ace Magazines.

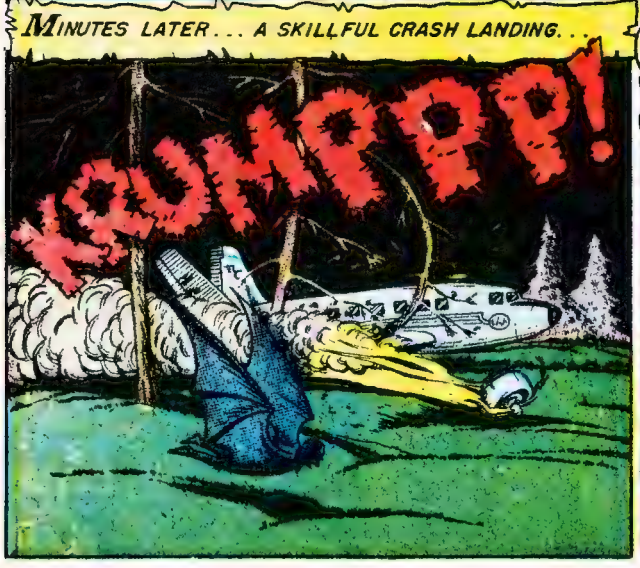
SLAT!

GREAT SCOTT! THOSE CREATURES JUST KNOCKED OUT ONE OF OUR ENGINES!
LOOK OUT. . .THEY'RE FLOCKING AROUND THE OTHER PROP! IF THAT ONE CONKS OUT, WE'RE GONERS!

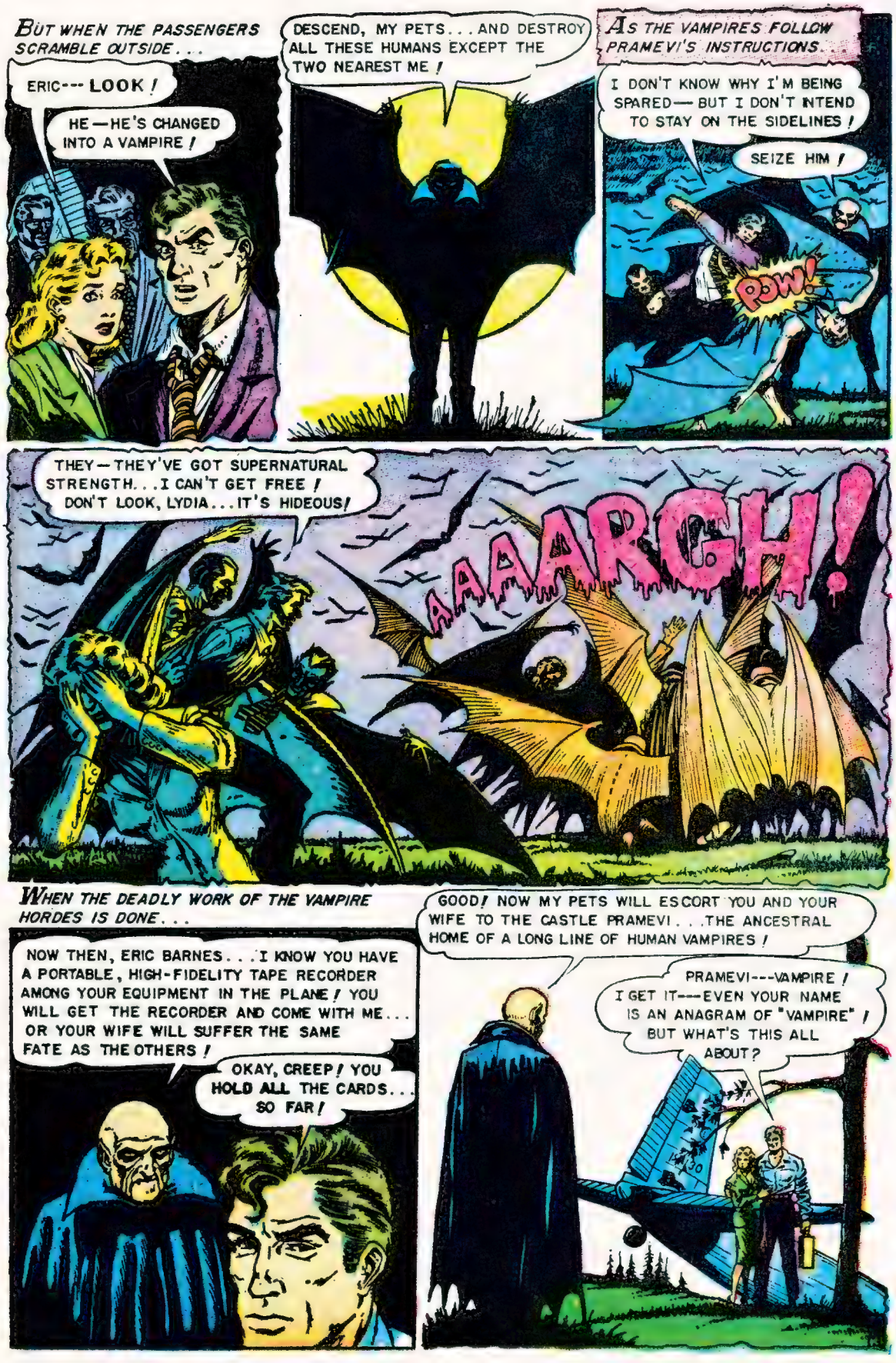

MY VAMPIRES WILL DESTROY YOUR OTHER PROPELLER AND SLAY YOU AND ALL YOUR PASSENGERS--- UNLESS YOU GLIDE DOWN TO A ONE-ENGINE LANDING IN A FOREST CLEARING THAT I WILL POINT OUT TO YOU!
HUH? WHO IN BLAZES ARE YOU---AND HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE CREEPS OUTSIDE WILL DO?

I AM KNOWN AS COUNT PRAMEV!... AND THOSE VAMPIRES ARE UNDER MY CONTROL! AS PROOF, I WILL HAVE THEM PLACE THEIR WEIGHT ON ONE OF YOUR WINGS! THAT WILL BALANCE THE PLANE AND HELP YOU LAND!

YOU WIN, PRAMEV! WE'LL LAND WHEREVER YOU SAY!


MINUTES LATER... A SKILLFUL CRASH LANDING...
KOWRRP!

OUTSIDE, EVERYONE! SPILLED GASOLINE MAY SET THE PLANE AFIRE ANY SECOND!


BUT WHEN THE PASSENGERS SCRAMBLE OUTSIDE...
ERIC--- LOOK!
HE—HE'S CHANGED INTO A VAMPIRE!
DESCEND, MY PETS... AND DESTROY ALL THESE HUMANS EXCEPT THE TWO NEAREST ME!
AS THE VAMPIRES FOLLOW PRAMEVI'S INSTRUCTIONS...
I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M BEING SPARED— BUT I DON'T INTEND TO STAY ON THE SIDELINES!
SEIZE HIM!
POW!
THEY—THEY'VE GOT SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH...I CAN'T GET FREE! DON'T LOOK, LYDIA...IT'S HIDEOUS!
AAAARGH!
WHEN THE DEADLY WORK OF THE VAMPIRE HORDES IS DONE...
NOW THEN, ERIC BARNES...I KNOW YOU HAVE A PORTABLE, HIGH-FIDELITY TAPE RECORDER AMONG YOUR EQUIPMENT IN THE PLANE! YOU WILL GET THE RECORDER AND COME WITH ME... OR YOUR WIFE WILL SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS THE OTHERS!
OKAY, CREEP! YOU HOLD ALL THE CARDS... SO FAR!
GOOD! NOW MY PETS WILL ESCORT YOU AND YOUR WIFE TO THE CASTLE PRAMEVI...THE ANCESTRAL HOME OF A LONG LINE OF HUMAN VAMPIRES!
PRAMEVI---VAMPIRE! I GET IT---EVEN YOUR NAME IS AN ANAGRAM OF "VAMPIRE"! BUT WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

I WILL EXPLAIN. I AM THE LAST OF MY FAMILY. . . AND I NEEDED AN EXPERT RECORDING ENGINEER TO HELP ME LIVE ON AFTER DEATH! THAT WAS WHY I GOT ON THE PLANE AT ROME AND SUMMONED MY VAMPIRE HORDES AT THE RIGHT MOMENT BY MEANS OF BATLIKE, HIGH-FREQUENCY SOUND EMANATIONS!
I AM THE ONLY LIVING, MORTAL VAMPIRE HERE! ALL THESE OTHERS WERE ONCE MY VICTIMS. . . AFTER SLAYING THEM, I TRANSFORMED THEM INTO ETERNAL VAMPIRES BY MEANS OF AN ANCIENT INCANTATION WHICH HAD BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION IN THE PRAMEVI FAMILY!
BUT THE VAMPIRE DEAD CAN'T SPEAK... SO NOW THAT MY ADVANCED AGE HAS BROUGHT MY MORTAL DEATH NEAR, I HAVE NO ONE TO UTTER THE INCANTATION AND AWAKEN ME FROM DEATH INTO ETERNAL LIFE AS A VAMPIRE!
I'M BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND— YOU WANTED A RECORDING MADE OF YOUR FIENDISH INCANTATION!
YES. . . A RECORDING WHICH I COULD PLAY BACK JUST BEFORE MY DEATH, SO THAT MY DEAD SPIRIT WOULD BE FORCED TO OBEY THE INCANTATION!
BUT WHY DID YOU HAVE TO PICK ON US TO HELP YOU? WHY COULDN'T YOU GO TO THE NEAREST CITY AND HAVE A RECORDING MADE?
BECAUSE THE ONE WHO UTTERS THE CHANT MUST BE IN A VAMPIRE FORM. . . AND HOW LONG WOULD A VAMPIRE LAST IN A CITY FULL OF ENEMIES? NOR COULD I BUY THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND MAKE THE RECORDING MYSELF HERE IN THE CASTLE. . . BECAUSE IT MUST BE HIGH-FIDELITY, AND I KNOW NOTHING OF SUCH THINGS! SO WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU WERE FLYING TO SALZBURG, ERIC BARNES. . .
YOU WAYLAID ME! BUT YOUR PLAN WON'T WORK— BECAUSE I REFUSE TO HELP PERPETUATE SUCH AN EVIL LIFE AS YOURS BY MAKING THE RECORDING!
FOOL. . . I HAVE MEANS OF PERSUADING YOU! WATCH!

AS PRAMEVI STRIKES WITH UNCANNY SWIFTNESS—
OHHH!
WHY, YOU...!
SHE—SHE'S CHANGING... HORRIBLY! WHAT'VE YOU DONE TO HER, YOU DEVIL?
MY BITE WASN'T ENOUGH TO KILL HER, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO TRANSFORM HER SLOWLY INTO A MORTAL VAMPIRE! ONLY UPON MY DEATH WILL SHE RETURN TO HER HUMAN FORM!
SO THE SOONER YOU MAKE THE RECORDING, THE SOONER WILL I TAKE THE DEADLY POISON THAT WILL RID ME OF MY MORTAL BODY... AND THE SOONER WILL YOUR WIFE BECOME HUMAN AGAIN!
YOU—YOU WIN, PRAMEVI! I—I'VE GOT TO HAVE LYDIA BACK AS SHE WAS EVEN IF THE RECORDING I MAKE DOES AWAKEN YOU TO A LIFE OF ETERNAL EVIL!
MINUTES LATER
OKAY, THE RECORDING EQUIPMENT IS READY! LET'S HAVE YOUR SPIEL!
MALU NAM SATANIENSIS! HEAR ME, O SPIRIT OF THE DEAD... RETURN TO LIFE AND OBEY THE CALL OF THE VAMPIRE MASTER...
AS THE WIERD CHANT FADES AWAY IN THE BARONIAL HALL...
IT IS DONE! NOW PLAY IT BACK AND LET ME HEAR MY VOICE SO THAT I MAY BE SURE THE RECORDING IS PERFECT!
SURE! I'LL JUST — OH, OH! THE PLAYBACK WON'T WORK! ONE OF THE AMPLIFIER TUBES MUST HAVE BEEN DAMAGED IN THE PLANE CRASH!
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE RECORDER BACK TO THE TESTING EQUIPMENT IN THE PLANE IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHICH TUBE IS NO GOOD!
VERY WELL ...BUT NO TRICKS! YOU WILL HAVE AN ESCORT OF VAMPIRE GUARDS... AND YOUR WIFE WILL REMAIN HERE WITH ME AS A HOSTAGE!

SOON AFTERWARDS, NOT FAR FROM THE PLANE...

PRAMEVI DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ANY TUBES / NOW TO PLAY BACK THE RECORDING, WHILE CUTTING OUT THE VOLUME ON A FEW WORDS OF THE INCANTATION...

MALU NAM SATANIENSIS / HEAR ME, O SPIRIT OF THE DEAD---RETURN TO THE VAMPIRE MASTER!

THEY'RE HESITATING / ONE MORE PLAYBACK OF THE CRUCIAL WORDS OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK /

RETURN TO...THE VAMPIRE MASTER!

IT'S WORKING / THEY'RE LIKE MINDLESS SLAVES, OBEYING THEIR MASTER'S VOICE / I'M FREE NOW...FREE TO WORK OUT MY PLAN /

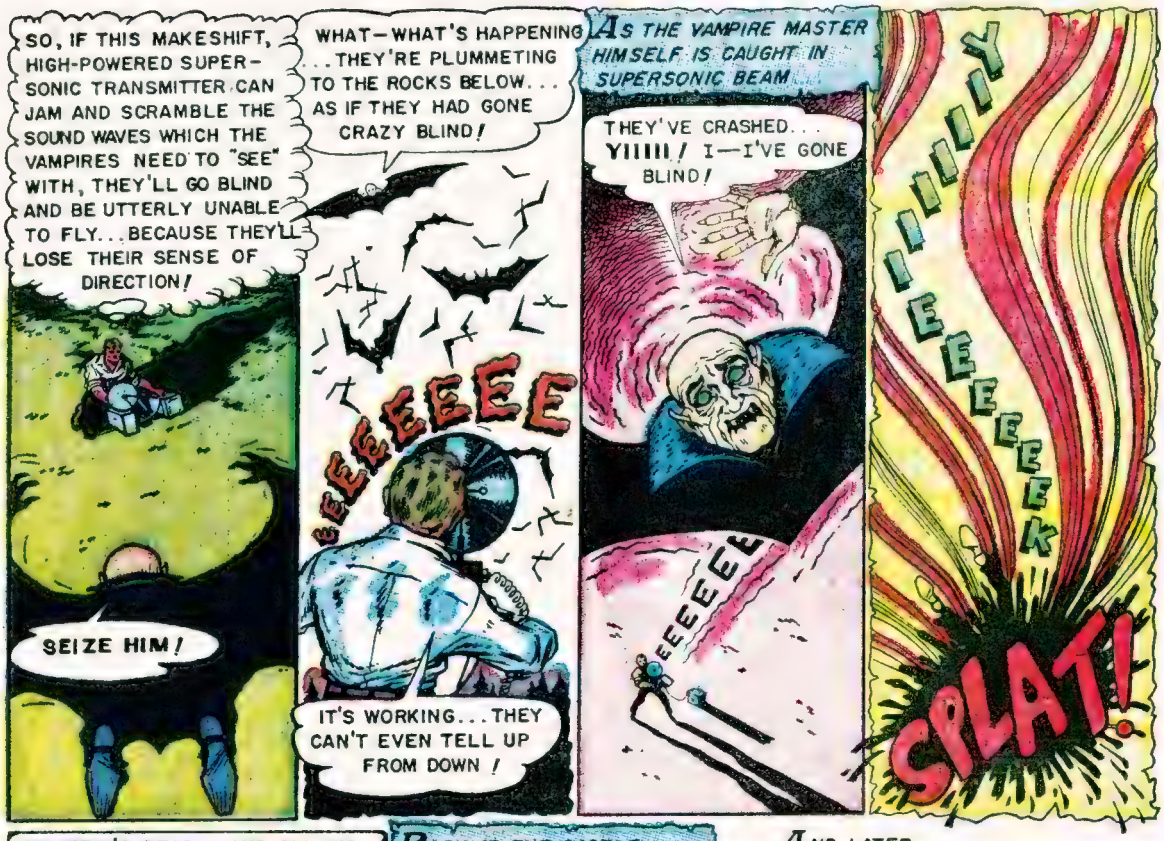
PRAMEVI WILL REGAIN CONTROL OF THE VAMPIRES WHEN THEY RETURN TO THE CASTLE...AND THEY'LL ALL BE COMING AFTER ME...FOR BLOOD / SO I'LL HAVE TO GET THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT OUT OF THE PLANE, AND DRAG IT ALL TO THE NEAREST ROCKY GROUND...FAST /

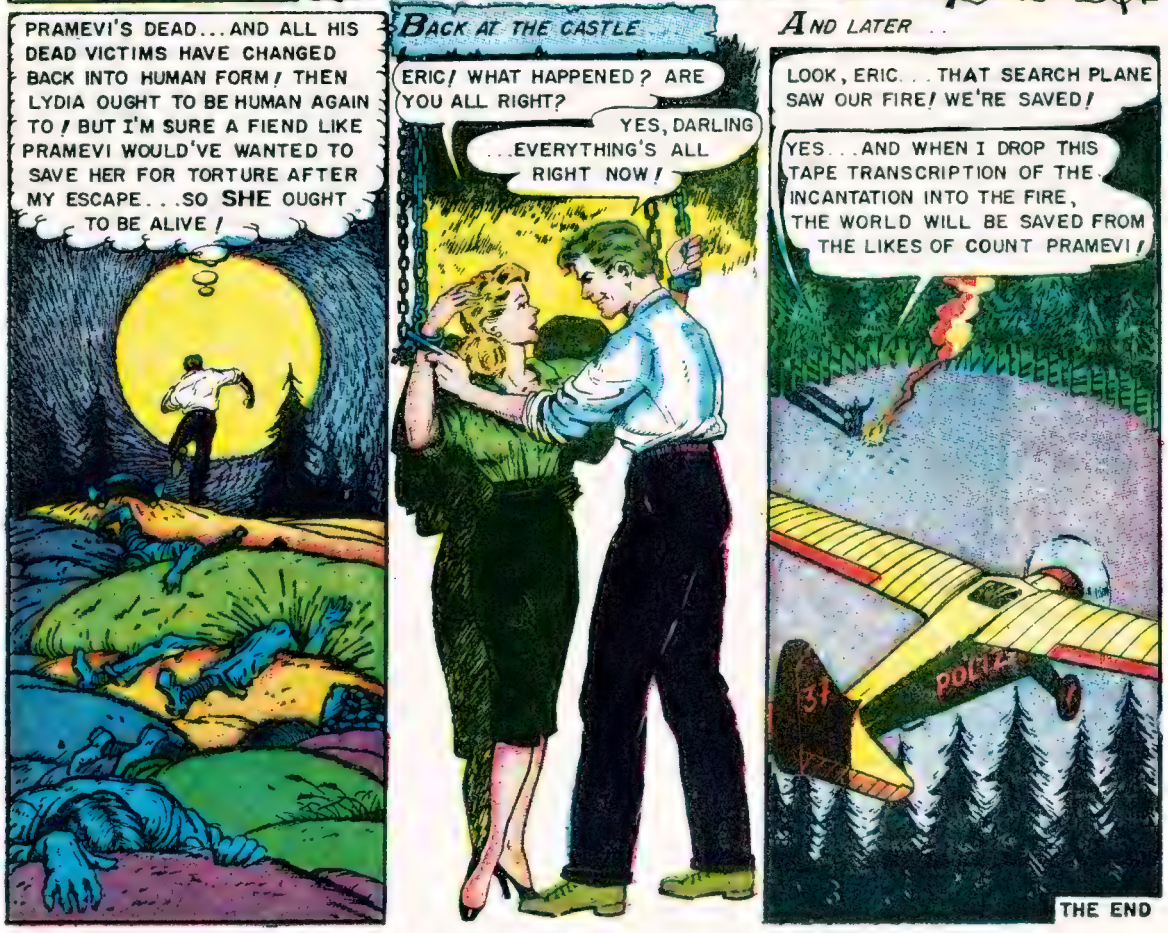
WHEN THE VAMPIRES TROOP BACK INTO THE CASTLE...

BAH...I DIDN'T ORDER YOU TO RETURN HERE WITHOUT HIM / HE MUST HAVE TRICKED YOU SOMEHOW / BUT WE'LL FIND HIM AND DRAG HIM BACK HERE TO WITNESS THE TORTURES I WILL MAKE HIS WIFE SUFFER / CHAIN HER TO THE WALL...UNTIL WE RETURN /

A SHORT TIME LATER...

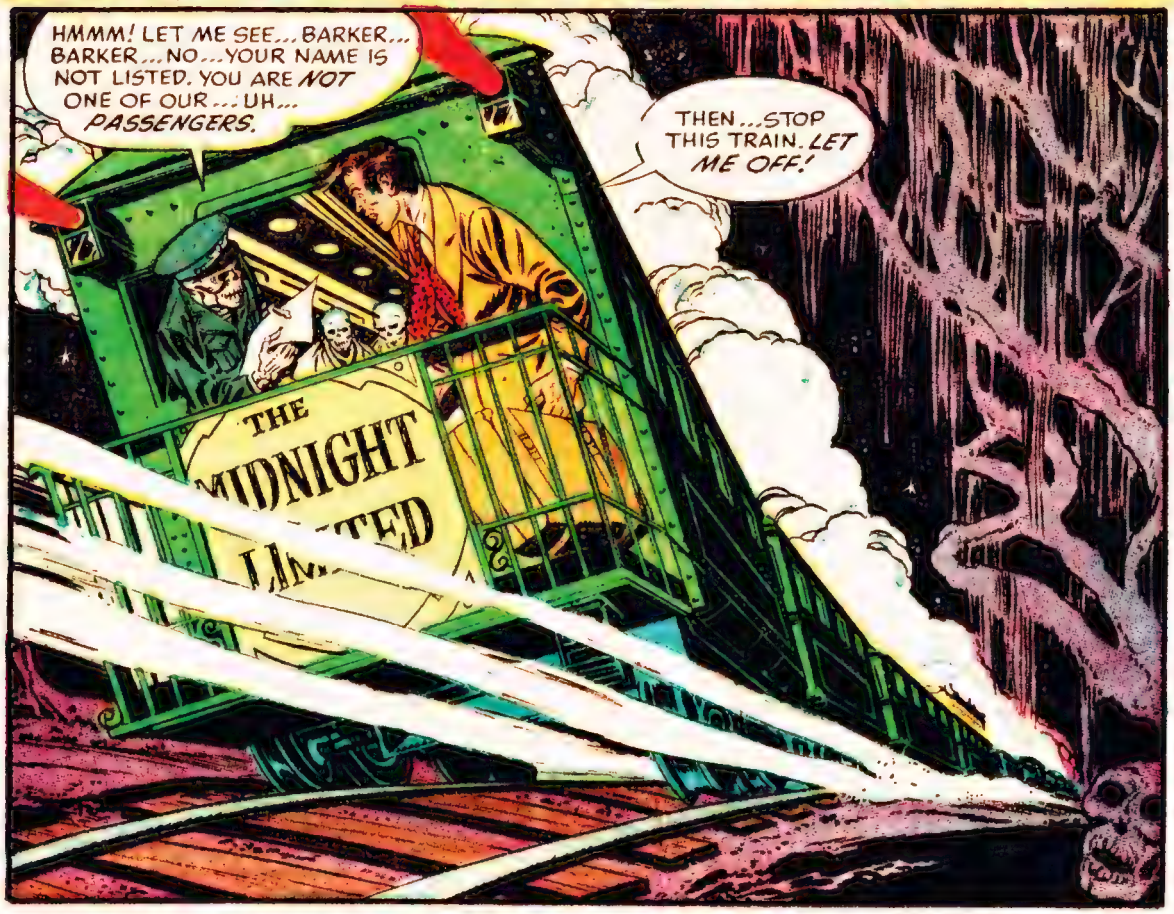
I REMEMBER READING THAT BATS NEVER SEE WITH THEIR EYES... THEY JUST EMIT HIGH-FREQUENCY SOUND WAVES WHICH BOUNCE OFF SOLID OBJECTS THE WAY RADAR IMPULSES DO... AND THE SUPER-SONIC IMPULSES ARE REFLECTED BACK TO THEIR HIGHLY SENSITIVE AUDITORY NERVES / SO...


SO, IF THIS MAKESHIFT, HIGH-POWERED SUPER-SONIC TRANSMITTER CAN JAM AND SCRAMBLE THE SOUND WAVES WHICH THE VAMPIRES NEED TO "SEE" WITH, THEY'LL GO BLIND AND BE UTTERLY UNABLE TO FLY...BECAUSE THEY'LL LOSE THEIR SENSE OF DIRECTION!
SEIZE HIM!
WHAT—WHAT'S HAPPENING ...THEY'RE PLUMMETING TO THE ROCKS BELOW... AS IF THEY HAD GONE CRAZY BLIND!
EEEEEEEE
IT'S WORKING...THEY CAN'T EVEN TELL UP FROM DOWN!
AS THE VAMPIRE MASTER HIMSELF IS CAUGHT IN SUPERSONIC BEAM...
THEY'VE CRASHED... YIIIII! I—I'VE GONE BLIND!
EEEEEE
YIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEK
SPLAT!


PRAMEVI'S DEAD...AND ALL HIS DEAD VICTIMS HAVE CHANGED BACK INTO HUMAN FORM! THEN LYDIA OUGHT TO BE HUMAN AGAIN TO! BUT I'M SURE A FIEND LIKE PRAMEVI WOULD'VE WANTED TO SAVE HER FOR TORTURE AFTER MY ESCAPE...SO SHE OUGHT TO BE ALIVE!
BACK AT THE CASTLE...
ERIC! WHAT HAPPENED? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, DARLING ...EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT NOW!
AND LATER...
LOOK, ERIC...THAT SEARCH PLANE SAW OUR FIRE! WE'RE SAVED!
YES...AND WHEN I DROP THIS TAPE TRANSCRIPTION OF THE INCANTATION INTO THE FIRE, THE WORLD WILL BE SAVED FROM THE LIKES OF COUNT PRAMEVI!
THE END

A SHRILL, EERIE BLAST PIERCES THE NIGHT. AND THEN A MUFFLED, KNELLING CLACKETY-CLACK... A HORRIBLE CHUGGING OF A TRAIN'S WHEELS... AND FINALLY THE ...

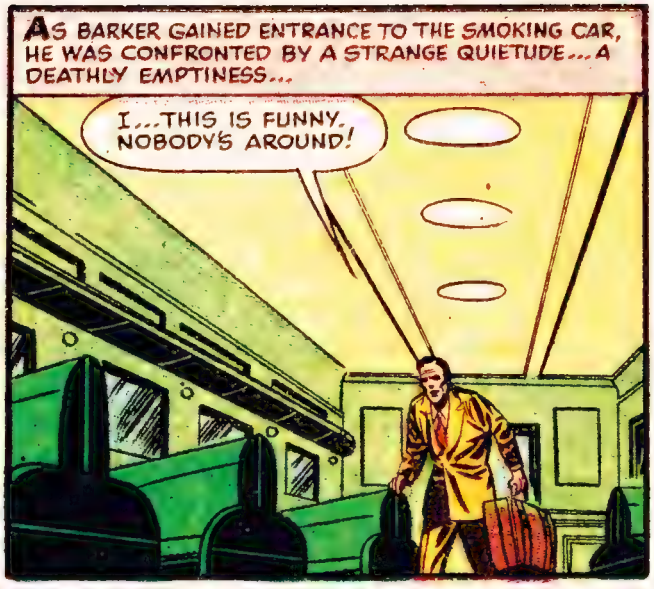
MIDNIGHT LIMITED!

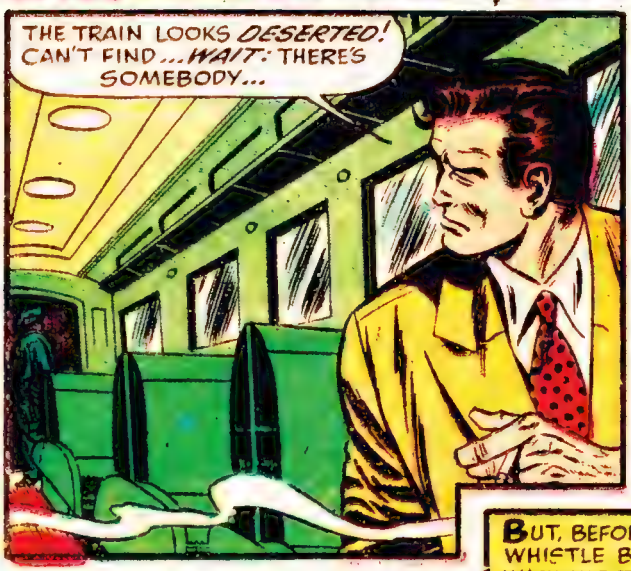

HMMM! LET ME SEE... BARKER... BARKER... NO... YOUR NAME IS NOT LISTED. YOU ARE NOT ONE OF OUR... UH... PASSENGERS.
THEN... STOP THIS TRAIN. LET ME OFF!
THE

TO DAVE BARKER, TRAVELLING SALESMAN, THIS WAS JUST ANOTHER RAMP LEADING DOWN TO JUST ANOTHER TRAIN...
THAT LOOKS LIKE MY TRAIN. I BETTER...
MIDNIGHT LIMITED

Witches Tales #16, November 1952. Artist: Joe Certa. Publisher: Harvey.

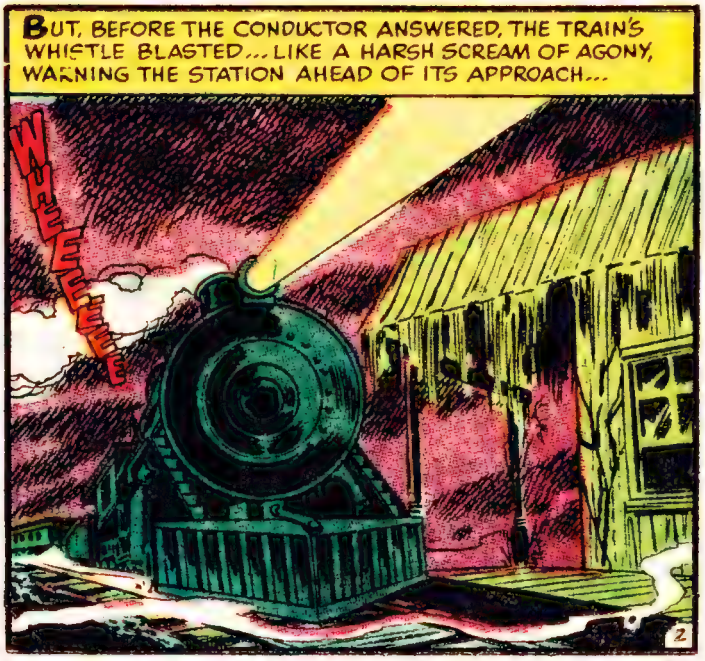
MADE IT! NOW TO GET INSIDE...
THE MIDNIGHT LIMITED

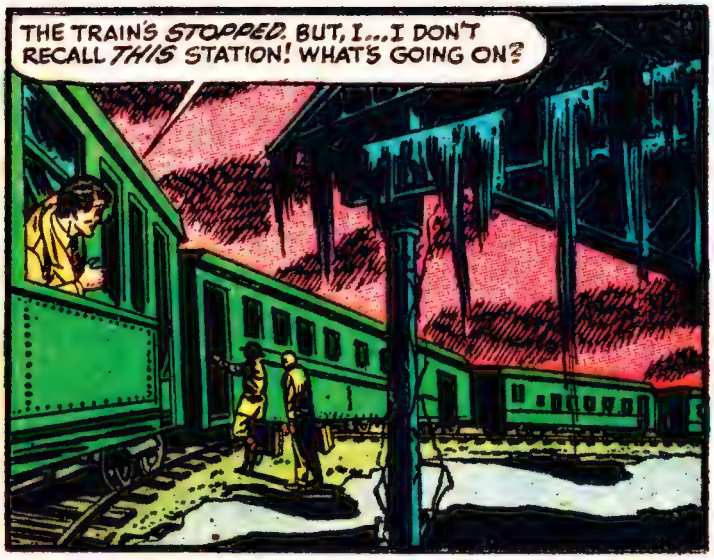

AS BARKER GAINED ENTRANCE TO THE SMOKING CAR, HE WAS CONFRONTED BY A STRANGE QUIETUDE... A DEATHLY EMPTINESS...
I...THIS IS FUNNY. NOBODY'S AROUND!


THE TRAIN LOOKS DESERTED! CAN'T FIND...WAIT: THERE'S SOMEBODY...

CAN I HELP YOU, SIR?
YEAH! MY NAME'S DAVE BARKER. I...I'M LOOKING FOR MY COMPARTMENT.

TAKE ANY ONE. THEY'RE ALL ALIKE!
WHY, THAT'S ODD FOR ANY TRAIN I'VE BEEN ON. WHAT TRAIN IS THIS?

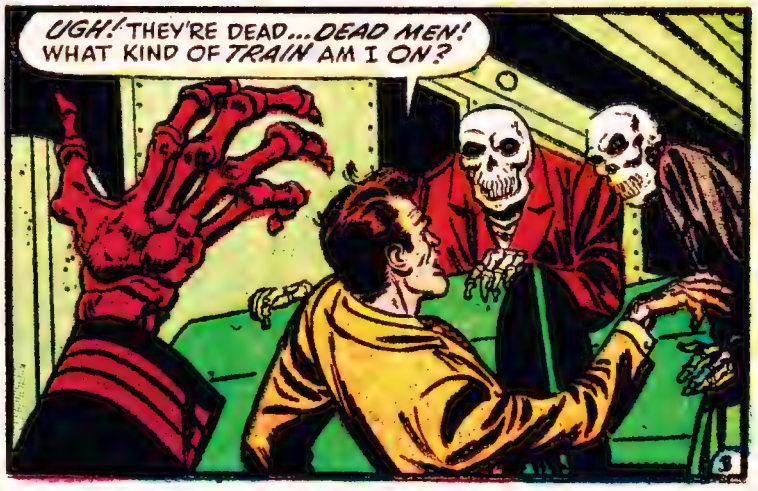

BUT, BEFORE THE CONDUCTOR ANSWERED, THE TRAIN'S WHISTLE BLASTED... LIKE A HARSH SCREAM OF AGONY, WARNING THE STATION AHEAD OF ITS APPROACH...
WHEEEEEEE


THE TRAIN'S STOPPED. BUT, I...I DON'T RECALL THIS STATION! WHAT'S GOING ON?

I'VE GOT TO TALK TO SOMEONE...THOSE PEOPLE WHO GOT ON AT THE LAST STOP... I'LL ASK THEM...

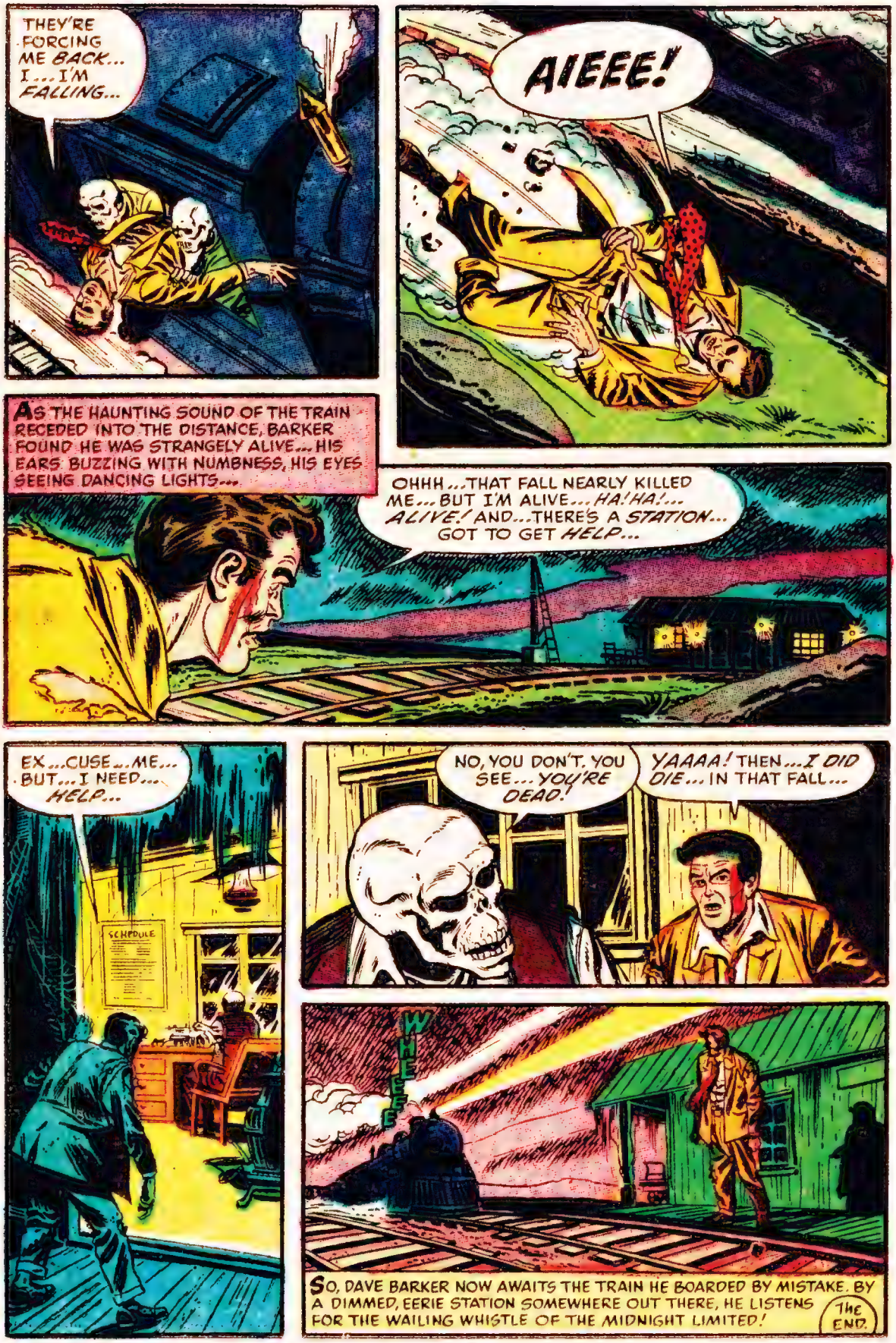
FRANTICALLY, BARKER COMBED THE TRAIN FOR THE TWO LATE ARRIVALS. THEN, AT THE END OF A NARROW, DANK VESTIBULE HE FOUND...
THE SMOKING CAR! THEY'RE PROBABLY IN HERE!

HELLO! MY NAME'S... AIEEE!


UGH! THEY'RE DEAD...DEAD MEN! WHAT KIND OF TRAIN AM I ON?

YAAAAA!
MR. BARKER, I'VE BEEN LOOKING OVER OUR PASSENGER LIST. YOUR NAME IS NOT ON IT!
I... I TOOK THE WRONG TRAIN! I'LL GET OFF AT...
THAT'S IMPOGGIBLE! YOU SEE... THIS IS THE MIDNIGHT LIMITED! IT STOPS ONLY FOR... THE DEAD!
YOU MUST STAY ON! THEREFORE... YOU MUST DIE!
NOOO! KEEP AWAY!
AS BARKER RUNS THROUGH THE TRAIN, COLD SWEAT FORMS ON HIS BROW... THE FIRST SIGNS OF UNSHAKEABLE FEAR..
...GOT TO ESCAPE. MY COMPARTMENT... I'LL LOCK MYSELF IN!
THE DOOR DOESN'T LOCK! NO KEY... I ... WHAT IS...?
YOU CANNOT LIVE...
ARGGHHH!...CAN'T BREATHE...

UNHHH!
FREE! I MUST RUN... RUNNN!
HYSTERICALLY, BARKER SOUGHT AN AVENUE OF ESCAPE... ANYTHING THAT OFFERED RELEASE FROM THE DANK TASTE OF DEATH ABOUT HIM...
I'M... TRAPPED. CAN'T FIND... WAIT! THIS LADDER... IT'S TO THE COAL CAR...
I'LL NEVER BE FOUND... UP THERE!
THE ENGINE! HA! HA! I'LL STOP THIS TRAIN... MYSELF! IT'LL NEVER REACH ITS DESTINATION. I'LL BE SAFE! HA! HA!
YAAA! THEY'VE SEEN ME. THAT SHOVEL...
GET BACK. LET ME ALONE.
WHAM
5


THEY'RE FORCING ME BACK... I... I'M FALLING...
AIEEE!
AS THE HAUNTING SOUND OF THE TRAIN RECEDED INTO THE DISTANCE, BARKER FOUND HE WAS STRANGELY ALIVE... HIS EARS BUZZING WITH NUMBNESS, HIS EYES SEEING DANCING LIGHTS...
OHHH... THAT FALL NEARLY KILLED ME... BUT I'M ALIVE... HA! HA!... ALIVE! AND... THERE'S A STATION... GOT TO GET HELP...
EX... CUSE... ME... BUT... I NEED... HELP...
SCHEDULE
NO, YOU DON'T. YOU SEE... YOU'RE DEAD!
YAAAA! THEN... I DID DIE... IN THAT FALL...
WHEEE
SO, DAVE BARKER NOW AWAITS THE TRAIN HE BOARDED BY MISTAKE. BY A DIMMED, EERIE STATION SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, HE LISTENS FOR THE WAILING WHISTLE OF THE MIDNIGHT LIMITED!
THE END

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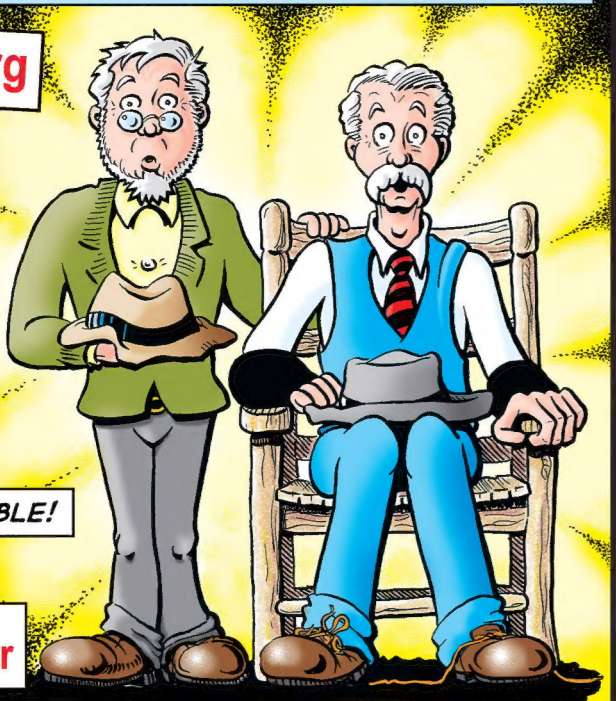

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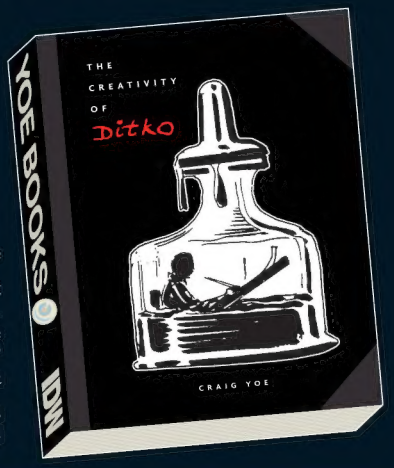

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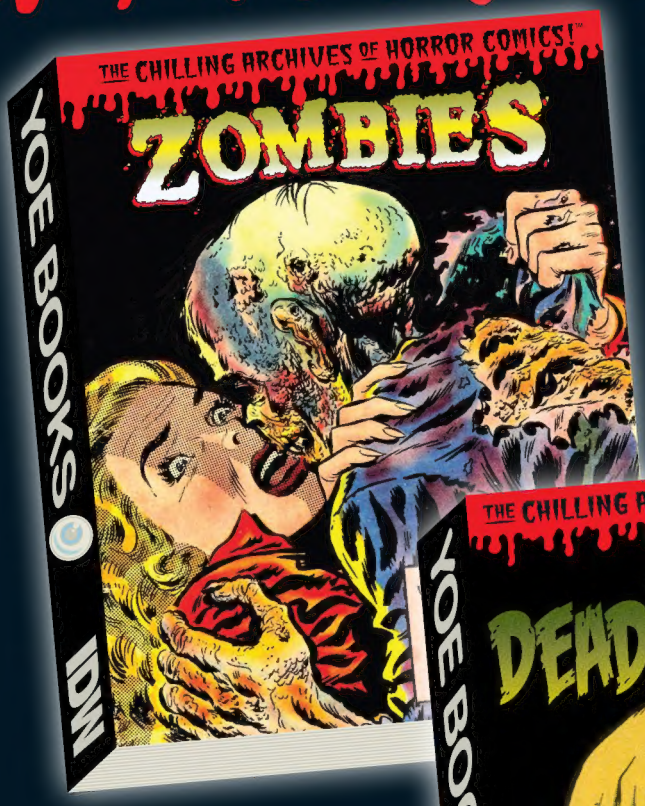

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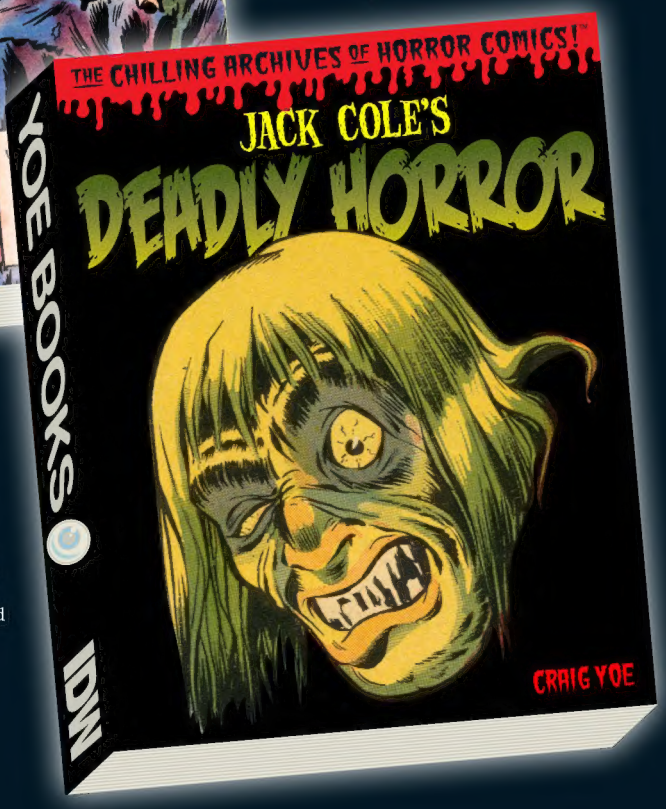

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